



**USM BOARD OF REGENTS
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
Conference Call
December 1, 2022**

**Public Listen-Only Access: 443-353-0686
Conference ID: 694 963 766**

AGENDA FOR PUBLIC SESSION

11:00 am

Call to Order

Chairman Breslin

1. [Request to remove the Columbus Center name at 701 East Pratt Street \(action\)](#)
2. [Reconvene to Closed Session \(action\)](#)



BOARD OF REGENTS

SUMMARY OF ITEM FOR ACTION,
INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

TOPIC: Request to Remove the Columbus Center Name (action)

COMMITTEE: Advancement Committee

DATE OF MEETING: December 1, 2022

SUMMARY: With the full support of the three presidents with jurisdiction over the Columbus Center located on 701 East Pratt Street, the Executive Director of the University System of Maryland (USM) Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) is submitting a request to remove “Columbus Center” name. While IMET is the building’s majority occupant, the building also houses the Chancellor’s Headquarters, the Towson University Center for STEM Excellence, and space leased to private entities involved in science-related fields.

[USM VI-4.00 Policy on the Naming of Facilities and Programs](#) outlines the criteria and processes for naming and the removal of a name from a USM facility. In accordance with [USM VI-4.00](#),

“If a previously approved naming violates the standards or values of the USM and its constituent institutions, compromises the public trust or reputation of an institution, or is contrary to applicable law, the Board of Regents may remove a name.”

It is the conclusion of the committee charged with exploring the removal of the Columbus Center name that the Columbus name—given what is known of Christopher Columbus’ actions and legacy—does not reflect IMET’s aspirations to be a welcoming enterprise to underrepresented students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

The attached materials summarize the process leading to the committee’s recommendation and key issues the committee considered.

ALTERNATIVE(S):

FISCAL IMPACT: Minimal cost of removing signage and any online references

CHANCELLOR’S RECOMMENDATION: The Chancellor recommends approval of this request.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

DATE: 12.1.22

BOARD ACTION:

DATE:

SUBMITTED BY: Leonard Raley, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, rale@usmd.edu
301-445-1941



Board of Regents
University System of Maryland
701 E. Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

November 17, 2022

Dear Regents:

We write today to formally request that the Board of Regents remove the name “Columbus Center” from the USM building located at 701 East Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD.

Dr. Russell Hill, Executive Director of Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET), submitted a comprehensive memorandum (attached) outlining the rationale for removing the “Columbus Center” name and detailing the process and careful considerations taken to arrive at this recommendation. Therein, he makes the case that the Columbus Center namesake’s actions and legacy detracts from IMET’s values.

We believe this request package meets the requirements of the Board of Regents Policy on Naming ([USM VI-4.00 Policy on the Naming of Facilities and Programs](#)) and support the request as presented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Sheares Ashby".

Valerie Sheares Ashby
President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Goodwin".

Peter Goodwin
President, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce E. Jarrell".

Bruce E. Jarrell
President, University of Maryland Baltimore



Columbus Center
701 East Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.234.8800
Fax 410.234.8896
www.imet.usmd.edu

To: Peter Goodwin
President, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Bruce Jarrell
President, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Valerie Sheares Ashby
President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

From: Russell Hill *R Hill*
Executive Director, Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology

Date: 17th November, 2022

Re: Request to Remove the Columbus Center Name

For your review and reference, I am submitting a revised formal request to remove “Columbus Center” from the name of the 701 East Pratt Street building (the Center) that houses the University System of Maryland (USM) Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) research center. While IMET is the building’s majority occupant, the building also houses the Chancellor’s Headquarters, the Towson University Center for STEM Excellence, and space leased to private entities involved in science-related fields.

[USM VI-4.00 Policy on the Naming of Facilities and Programs](#) outlines the criteria and processes for naming and the removal of a name from a USM facility. In accordance with [USM VI-4.00](#),

“If a previously approved naming violates the standards or values of the USM and its constituent institutions, compromises the public trust or reputation of an institution, or is contrary to applicable law, the Board of Regents may remove a name.”

It is the conclusion of the committee charged with exploring the removal of the Columbus Center name that the Columbus name—given what is known of Christopher Columbus’ actions and legacy—does not reflect IMET’s aspirations to be a welcoming enterprise to underrepresented students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

This document summarizes the process leading to the committee’s recommendation and key issues the committee considered.



Process Considering the Name Removal

The Editorial Board of *The Retriever*, UMBC’s student-run newspaper, published an op-ed, *Our Call to Rename the Columbus Center in Baltimore*, in its July 05, 2020, online edition (Appendix A). The editorial referenced the toppling of an Inner Harbor-located statue honoring Christopher Columbus by Baltimoreans on the Fourth of July. The writers noted the Columbus Center name on the IMET research facility, which is managed by UMBC, and argued incongruity between deplorable actions associated with Christopher Columbus— “violence, rape, and human trafficking of indigenous people”—and UMBC’s values and vision. The authors called for definitive action from UMBC and a renaming of the building in honor of one of the many distinguished and successful individuals with ties to UMBC or the IMET.

Prior to the publication of the article, IMET faculty and representative staff and graduate students expressed concerns related to the Center’s name. These concerns were raised at a faculty meeting following the tragic death of George Floyd and amidst the calls for greater social justice that followed.

In response to the editorial and to the concerns expressed by members of the Center’s community, IMET’s partner university presidents asked me to assemble a committee to consider removal of the Columbus Center name. An eleven-member committee was established to consider the matter (Appendix B). The committee membership was gender and culturally diverse and representative of faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and students across the three partnership institutions. In addition, a representative of the National Aquarium, which neighbors the Columbus Center, and a representative of the Baltimore City Mayor’s office served on the committee.

[USM VI-4.00](#), (the naming policy or the policy), instructs that a request to remove a name from a building that is administered across multiple institutions must be submitted to the Board of Regents jointly by the presidents of each institution. The presidents of IMET’s partner universities—University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), and University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)—charged a committee with exploring the removal of the Columbus Center name.

On July 12, 2021, Presidents Goodwin (UMCES), Hrabowski (UMBC), and Jarrell (UMB) charged the committee as follows (Appendix C):

We charge you as the Committee to consider removing the current name of the Columbus Center from the University System of Maryland building located at 701 East Pratt Street, the primary occupant of which is the USM research center, the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology. The context of the review is described in detail in Appendix C.

In conducting its work, the committee discussed the history of the Columbus Center as related to the building's name; the UMBC Retriever article; a petition from the IMET community; and the historical record and changing perceptions of Christopher Columbus. Details regarding the committee's findings are discussed in the next sections of this document.

At its October 8, 2021, meeting, the committee voted unanimously on the following motion:

I move that this committee recommend to Presidents Goodwin, Hrabowski, and Jarrell that the name "Columbus Center" be removed from the USM building located at 701 East Pratt Street" and request that the Presidents lay this matter before the USM Board of Regents. (Appendix D)

On March 9, 2022, Presidents Goodwin, Hrabowski, and Jarrell wrote a letter of support requesting the removal of the "Columbus Center" name.

Key Considerations Examined by the Committee

Original Naming: The guidance provided in [USM VI-4.0](#) guidance states, "Whenever available, the documents and discussions making the case for the original naming should be considered, as well as the rigor of the review process." A review of documents indicated that 701 East Pratt Street building was built in 1995 to be a multi-use facility. It was developed to accommodate the growth of IMET's predecessor, the Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB), and to contribute to the growth of Baltimore as a life sciences community. Key people behind the building were Rita Colwell, the previous President of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, Stan Heusler, editor of Baltimore Magazine (later President of the Columbus Center Development Inc.) and Bob Embry, President of the Abell Foundation. Support also came from Senator Barbara Mikulski.

The Christopher Columbus Center for Marine Research and Exploration was dedicated in October 1991. The Columbus name was selected to evoke the spirit of exploration and to also capitalize on the fundraising potential in 1992 of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landfall in 1492. COMB moved into the building at the end of 1995. Soon thereafter, the Columbus Center rapidly went into financial difficulties and was bankrupt by 1998. The USM became the owner of the building at that time.

A review of documents related to the USM's acquisition of the Columbus Center shows that the focus of the transition was on financial and legal matters related to the receivership and on adding the USM brand to the building's identity. Documentation of any rigorous discussion, or any discussion at all, related the Columbus name on the building could not be found. Therefore, it is believed that discussion related to controversies associated with the Columbus name was not undertaken when the USM acquired the building.

Clearly documented research about the prevalence and persistence of the namesake's objectionable behavior. The USM naming policy notes that "new research and reinterpretations about prominent figures can reveal behaviors and factors not known or emphasized at the time of

the naming.” The Committee reviewed research on Christopher Columbus’s role in colonization (Appendix E).

Columbus is an important historical figure who has been revered as the discoverer of America even though his landfall in 1492 was in the Bahamas (<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/columbus-makes-landfall-caribbean>). In the past thirty years, partly as a result of increased scrutiny by historians at the time of the 500th anniversary of the voyage of Columbus, attitudes towards Columbus have shifted substantially. The influential book by Howard Zinn, “A People’s History of the United States”, published in 1980 was an important precursor to the reconsideration of Columbus.

Columbus’s role in the colonization of Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) resulted in widespread brutality and genocide, reported in graphic detail by Bartolomé de las Casas (translation by Nigel Griffin, 1991) who arrived in Hispaniola in 1502. One of the less-graphic excerpts reads “They [Spanish explorers] forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there, including small children, old men, pregnant women, and even women who had just given birth.” In Columbus’s own diary, after sending 500 slaves back to Spain, of whom 200 died during the journey, Columbus wrote “Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold”. The Harvard historian Morison (1969) who generally regarded Columbus as a hero, wrote “The cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors resulted in complete genocide.” Tinker and Freeland (2008) estimate that the population of the native Tainos on the island of Hispaniola was 8 million in 1492 and that this population had been decimated to a few hundred remaining Tainos by 1542.

Many modern historians point out the flaws and misconceptions in the public perception of Columbus:

“Christopher Columbus did not discover America and was one of the most brutal colonizers in recorded history.” (Eason et al., 2021)

“He was also a man of sufficient intolerance and contempt for all who did not look or behave or believe as he did, that he thought nothing of enslaving or killing such people simply because they were not like him.” (Stannard, 1992)

Some historians have made the case that the shifting and more negative view of Columbus can be regarded as “revisionist history” and that it is not accurate or fair to judge Columbus from our modern-day perspective. Rather, some argue, Columbus should be judged by the standards of the time. Whether or not the term “genocide” should be used regarding the actions of Columbus has been debated by historians because of the difficulty of proving his intent. It is clear, however, that genocide resulted from his actions (Lane, 2015). Columbus’s cruelty and treatment of native people was condemned even by many of his contemporaries.

In addition to a review of readings, the committee also discussed the historical record and changing perceptions of Christopher Columbus. The committee viewed a video from Vox (<https://youtu.be/fNqOGhDMm8k>), a source that Ad Fontes media assesses as reliable, somewhat left leaning, yet reasonably balanced. The video explains how an idealized version of

Columbus has been developed and perpetuated over time, while ignoring the historical facts. It describes how the general perception of Columbus is changing as historians reexamine the story of Columbus and correct missing historical facts. This reexamination has led, for example, to cities across the nation opting out of celebrating Columbus Day and instead observing the day as Indigenous People's Day.

The committee discussed, agreed, and concluded that the general perspective of Columbus in the US is changing. It also noted that this national perspective is evident in IMET's hometown. In Baltimore City, where IMET is located, the [City Council voted](#) unanimously in 2020 to rename Columbus Day (Appendix F). Months prior, a [Christopher Columbus statue](#) near Baltimore City's Little Italy was thrown into the Inner Harbor (Appendix G).

There is a generational gap in knowledge and attitudes towards Columbus. A survey of people's attitudes towards Columbus completed in 2021 revealed that a narrow majority of people in the US under the age of 30 now view Columbus unfavorably (<https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2021/10/11/young-americans-know-and-christopher-columbus-far->). This suggests the national sentiment toward Columbus will likely persist.

The Past and Current Effect of the Namesake's Behavior. The policy guidelines state that consideration should be given to the past and current effect of the namesake's behavior and how the individual's behavior aligns with the educational mission and inclusive values of the university.

As explained earlier in this document, the perspective of Columbus as a national hero has changed and is now broadly contested as the historical account of his exploration has been reexamined. When the full picture and effects of Columbus's exploration, which includes genocide, slavery, and other brutal acts against native populations of colonized lands, is examined, it is clear that his legacy does not align with the USM's values of civility, service, and diversity, equity, and inclusion that shape IMET's mission.

IMET is committed to increasing diversity in marine and environmental sciences and actively works toward this goal by supporting, educating, graduating, and employing students from groups underrepresented in the sciences ([IMET 2021 Annual Report](#)). Given the changing perspective of Christopher Columbus, the committee discussed extensively the divisiveness of the name "Columbus" and its potential impact on the center. The committee felt the name has the potential to hinder IMET's mission of research, education, and economic development in which IMET needs to attract and engage students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

The Namesake's Relationship to the University. The naming policy calls for consideration of the namesake's objectively significant and noteworthy role in the history of the university.

While the committee did not discuss Christopher Columbus's relationship to the Center, a review of materials related to the center's initial naming and to USM's continued use of the Columbus name did not unearth any direct relationship to Columbus.

The policy also calls for the consideration of legal or other commitments the university has made to any donors (and their heirs) in connection with the name in question and related legal and financial implications.

As mentioned earlier, the name was selected to evoke the spirit of exploration and to also capitalize on the fundraising potential in 1992 of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landfall in 1492. Commitments to donors related to the Columbus Center naming could not be found. A review of any legal or fiscal obligations was completed as part of the due diligence when the USM's acquired the center and there aren't any outstanding obligations.

Further, as the Columbus name is not currently used for fundraising, the fundraising rationale for used of the name likely has run its useful life.

Possibilities for mitigation and interpretation. As stated in the naming policy guidelines, providing historical context and a reinterpretation of a name can be an opportunity to educate the university community about important aspects of its past.

The Committee did not discuss possibilities for mitigation and interpretation. It was noted in a later conversation with USM staff that the building maintains a cornerstone with the Columbus name engraved. This cornerstone with appropriate additional signage could provide educational context around the Columbus Center renaming,

Consideration of any legal issues and costs associated with removing the name

There appear to be no legal impediments to removing the name of the Center. There are foreseeable, but not substantial, costs with removing the name. These costs include expenses associated with signage removal, which is anticipated to be less than \$20,000. As mentioned, there is a Columbus Center sign engraved in the cornerstone of the building. I propose the installation of a brass plaque adjacent to that engraving as a means to educate the community on the renaming. The anticipated cost of this plaque is estimated at \$3,000. Other smaller items, like letterhead and business cards with the Columbus Center will be used until supplies run out in the interest of costs-savings and sustainability. There will also be some costs associated with updating of websites. These costs will be minimal, because the changes to websites can be completed as part of regular website updating.

Evidence on meaningful community engagement in considering the renaming

As stated in the naming policy, the voices and views of the entire university community should be a factor in considering the naming request. A request to remove a name is likely to elicit strong opinions. It is therefore essential that different perspectives are given respectful consideration. In cases where multiple institutions share a facility or academic program, input should be considered from every constituency.

The committee received input from the IMET community in the form of a petition (see Committee Meeting Minutes in Appendix D). IMET comprises approximately 100 research faculty, post-doctoral associates, research technicians, staff, and graduate students representing the three partner universities. In the Summer 2021, 66 members of the IMET community signed a petition overwhelmingly supporting the following statement:

“We, the undersigned, who work and study in the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology or are affiliated with the USM and work in the Columbus Center, request that the name “Columbus Center” be removed from the USM building located at 701 East Pratt Street.”

Opposition to the removal of the name was almost non-existent. The only opposition received came in the form of an anonymous letter pointing to “cancel culture” and including the statement “As Executive Director of IMET, housed in the Columbus Center, you have the unique opportunity to stand in opposition to the mob. You have an opportunity to stop, or at least to slow a Maoist Cultural Revolution here in the United States.”

Recognizing that the removal of the Columbus name might be controversial, the committee chair sought input from other key stakeholders. The committee chair sought advice from a former Baltimore City mayor who acknowledged sensitivities around the removal of the name and encouraged reaching out to other officials. Further outreach was conducted by the committee and Chancellor with a parish priest in Little Italy and two other elected officials. All recognized the sensitivities of removing the name but acknowledge the challenge in keeping the name.

Removal of the Columbus Center Name

On behalf of the committee charged with considering the removal of the Columbus Center name, I thank you for considering this request. Christopher Columbus’s legacy when viewed through a more critical and expanded understanding of his contributions does not align with IMET’s aspirations to welcome and embrace diverse groups.

I ask for your support for this request in the form of a letter to the Board of Regents for consideration in its December 1, 2022, meeting of the Committee on Advancement.

Appendix A



Staff Editorial: Our call to rename the Columbus Center in Baltimore

BY THE RETRIEVER EDITORIAL BOARD ON JULY 5, 2020

On the Fourth of July, the people of Baltimore [toppled](#) a Christopher Columbus statue, tossing it into the Inner Harbor with a triumphant splash. To that, we say good riddance and congratulations to Columbus for discovering the bottom of the Harbor!

Upon review of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County's involvement in this new age Civil Rights movement, we have seen that, while UMBC has generally been quick to make changes to our campus life when it comes to racism and hate speech, a UMBC-managed building in the heart of the Inner Harbor shares the name of a racist, xenophobic figure. It's called the [Columbus Center](#).

The Columbus Center holds the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology, a research facility that is “managed and operated by UMBC,” according to their website. Towson University’s Center for STEM Excellence, which teaches science education, is also located in the Columbus Center.

The Center champions exploration and collaboration. However, it is antiquated and ridiculous to state that any of Christopher Columbus’ [heinous acts](#) of violence, rape and human trafficking of indigenous people and Black people align with UMBC’s mission of innovation.

Though it is not on UMBC’s main campus, the prominence of the building on the Baltimore skyline is a blemish on UMBC’s equity-focused [vision](#), which aims to “advance knowledge, economic prosperity, and social justice by welcoming and inspiring inquisitive minds from all backgrounds.” So, we wonder: Why hasn’t UMBC realized the implications of the name of this massive building before now?

There are plenty of incredible researchers or scientists that UMBC could choose as a replacement. We suggest choosing a name from one of the many distinguished and successful researchers who have graced the UMBC community.

Another option is Senator [Barbara Mikulski](#), who was instrumental in gaining the funding for the building. Or perhaps [Valerie Thomas](#), the retired associate chief of the Space Science Data Operations Office at NASA who has served as an associate at the UMBC Center for Multicore Hybrid Productivity Research, earned countless awards for her excellence and graduated from Morgan State University, an HBCU in Baltimore.

Those are simply suggestions, but opening up the discussion to students of the University System of Maryland is crucial. Whether discourse or competition is in order, that is up to the USM.

On IMET’s website, there is a letter asking people to share ideas so that “IMET can be more engaged and effective on social justice issues in the coming months and years.” UMBC has a note on their

website homepage stating “To our Black students, faculty, and staff,
We see you. Your life matters. We’re taking action.”

If UMBC truly considers itself an ally to the Black community and to indigenous people, then it is necessary to rename a building that commemorates the deplorable actions of a slave trader — otherwise, their words become a hollow, inconsistent statement that fails to actually create change.

We look forward to seeing definitive action from UMBC. By reflecting on the people we give monuments to, the changes that we make will only make our university stronger and our mission statement more meaningful.

Edit: The Columbus Center is managed and operated by UMBC, not owned by UMBC.

Appendix B

Columbus Center Renaming Committee

Russell Hill (Chair)
Executive Director
Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology
Professor, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Curtis Bennett
Director of Equity and Community Engagement
National Aquarium

Terry Cook
Senior Associate Vice President for Administrative Services
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Jeanette Davis
IMET Alumna

Monica Gellene
Associate Director
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science - Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology

Miranda Judd
President
IMET Graduate Student Association

Dana Moore
Chief Equity Officer
Baltimore City

William Narden
Assistant Professor
Horn Point Laboratory
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Molly Pickel
Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications and Outreach Coordinator
Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology

Kevin Sowers
Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology Associate Director
University of Maryland, Baltimore County- Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology

Gerardo Vasta

Professor

Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology, University of Maryland Baltimore

Appendix C



Columbus Center
701 East Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.234.8800
Fax 410.234.8896
www.imet.usmd.edu

DATE: 12th July, 2021

TO: Russell Hill (chair) (Executive Director, Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET)); Curtis Bennett (Director of Equity and Community Engagement, National Aquarium); Terry Cook (Senior Associate Vice President for Administrative Services, UMBC); Jeanette Davis (IMET alumna); Monica Gellene (Associate Director, UMCES-IMET); Miranda Judd (President, IMET Graduate Student Association); Dana Moore (Baltimore City Chief Equity Officer); William Narden (Assistant Professor, Horn Point Laboratory, UMCES); Molly Pickel, Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications and Outreach Coordinator, IMET); Kevin Sowers (Associate Director and Professor, IMET); Gerardo Vasta (Professor, IMET, University of Maryland Baltimore).

FROM: Presidents Peter Goodwin (UMCES), Freeman Hrabowski (UMBC) and Bruce Jarrell (UMB)

SUBJECT: Charge to the Committee to consider removing the current name of the Columbus Center

We charge you as the Committee to consider removing the current name of the Columbus Center from the University System of Maryland building located at 701 East Pratt Street, the primary occupant of which is the USM research center, the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology. We ask you to consider this issue in the context of the following points.

- a. Embrace the role of the university as a training ground for citizens and future leaders and be true to the university mission.
- b. Ensure meaningful outreach to, and engagement with, the entire university community and the communities we serve.
- c. Understand and respect that the entire university community is the constituency, including those with different viewpoints from those making the request.
- d. Apply intellectual rigor that will bring context, a respect for tradition balanced with regard for discovery and changing viewpoints, and a perspective that such decisions must serve the university for the long term, not just a particular moment.

Finally, you have been selected because of your knowledge of the University and broader community and your engagement with the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology. Thank you for your willingness to take on this very important service.



Appendix D



Columbus Center
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RENAMING THE COLUMBUS CENTER COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Meeting 2 on 8 October, 2021; 1:00 pm to 1:50 pm

Attendees: Russell Hill (chair) (Executive Director, Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET)); Terry Cook (Senior Associate Vice President for Administrative Services, UMBC); Jeanette Davis (IMET alumna); Monica Gellene (Associate Director, UMCES-IMET); Miranda Judd (President, IMET Graduate Student Association); Dana Moore (Baltimore City Chief Equity Officer); William Nardin (Assistant Professor, Horn Point Laboratory, UMCES); Molly Pickel. Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications and Outreach Coordinator, IMET); Kevin Sowers (Associate Director and Professor, IMET); Gerardo Vasta (Professor, IMET, University of Maryland Baltimore).

Apologies: Curtis Bennett (Director of Equity and Community Engagement, National Aquarium)

The meeting started with Introductions. Russell Hill provided a brief summary of the discussions from the first meeting of the Committee, held on 1st September, 2021. Key points from the previous meeting were 1. a discussion of the historical record and changing perceptions of Christopher Columbus, 2. the reasons why this name had been selected for the building back in the early 1990's, including the hope of using the quincentenary of the landfall of Columbus as a fundraising opportunity, and 3. the lively discussion in which the Committee strongly agreed that the name "Columbus" on IMET's building has clearly

become divisive and may hinder IMET's mission of research, education and economic development and in particular IMET's goal of attracting students from diverse backgrounds to help make the workforce in environmental sciences more representative of the general community.

Russell Hill called for an open discussion on the renaming issue following the opportunity for committee members to reflect on this issue. A committee member raised the issue of the new name for the building. Russell Hill pointed out that the charge to the committee was to decide on removal of the current name "Columbus Center" and not to propose a new name. A new name for the building would be considered at a later date, assuming that the Presidents and the Chancellor took the issue of removal of the current name to the Board of Regents and the Regents then approved of the name removal. Russell Hill agreed to record and pass on to the Presidents the suggestions from the committee and the IMET community to serve as a resource should the process move to this next step. A name brought forward by the committee and previously by the IMET community with a great deal of support is the Colwell Center, named for Rita R. Colwell, a prominent Italian-American woman scientist who was the driving force behind the creation of IMET's predecessor institute and the building. Dr. Colwell went on to serve as the first woman director of the National Science Foundation and succeeded in doubling the budget of the NSF during her tenure serving under two U.S Presidents. Other names that were suggested are: Elijah Cummings, Barbara Mikulski, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas and Rachel Carson.

Russell Hill had previously undertaken to ensure that key local and State leaders were informed, at a time considered appropriate, that the process of removing the name "Columbus Center" was underway. Leaders mentioned during the first meeting of the Committee included Mayor Scott, Senate President Ferguson and Delegate Lierman. At the suggestion of a committee member, Russell Hill added Senator Mary Washington to this list.

The following motion was laid before the Committee:

I move that this committee recommends to Presidents Goodwin, Hrabowski and Jarrell that the name “Columbus Center” be removed from the USM building located at 701 East Pratt Street” and request that the Presidents lay this matter before the USM Board of Regents.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Russell Hill then outlined the next steps in this process. He undertook to provide Presidents Hrabowski (UMBC), Jarrell (UMB) and Goodwin (UMCES) with a summary of the Committee’s deliberations and request that the Presidents take this issue to Chancellor Perman. Chancellor Perman would then bring this issue to the Board of Regents for final approval or rejection. Russell Hill thanked the Committee for their work and their careful consideration on the important issue of re-naming the Columbus Center.



Appendix E

Clearly documented research about the prevalence and persistence of the namesake's objectionable behavior

Reference List

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Tinker T. and Freeland, M. (2008). Thief, Slave Trader, Murderer: Christopher Columbus and Caribbean Population Decline. *Wicazo Sa Review*. 23:1 pp 25-50.

Vox. Why the US Celebrates Columbus Day.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNqOGhDMm8k>

Appendix F

Baltimore City Council votes to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day

By Talia Richman
Baltimore Sun

•

Oct 05, 2020 at 6:27 pm



On July 1, 2020, people gathered for a "West Wednesday" protest near the Columbus Obelisk on Harford Road. (Kim Hairston/Baltimore Sun)

The Baltimore City Council pushed to accelerate the passage of a bill that would rename Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day, with lawmakers hoping it takes effect in time for next week's holiday.

Whether the city meets this deadline now lies in the hands of Democratic Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young. If he chooses to veto the legislation or let it become law without his signature, the change would not be official by Oct. 12. Young declined through a spokesman to comment Monday on his intentions.

The council voted to speed up the legislative process — invoking a rule that allows a bill to advance from second reading to a final third reading on the same day — so that the city would be in a position to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day this year, said Democratic Councilman John T. Bullock, [the bill's sponsor](#).

"This is a great time to move forward," he said.

While the council met virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, members of Indigenous Strong, an advocacy group representing Maryland's Native Americans, rallied outside of City Hall to express their support for the change.

Jessica Dickerson, of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and an Indigenous Strong member, said she's relieved and grateful that Baltimore "is now on the right side of history."

"We no longer have to be subject to Baltimore City celebrating someone who we describe as a murderer, someone who has taken so much from us," said Dickerson, 30.

Baltimore council members, like many people across the country, are calling for a reckoning over Columbus' legacy. The 15th-century Italian explorer was long credited in classrooms as a hero who discovered the Americas, rather than as a colonizer who violently enslaved native people.

Dozens of other cities and states — including Washington, D.C. — have taken the step of renaming the holiday that falls on the second Monday of October. Howard County [made the change last month](#), with leaders there saying it was a step toward recognizing the harm done to Native Americans.

City Council President Brandon Scott, now the Democratic nominee for mayor, unsuccessfully [attempted to have the holiday's name altered](#) in 2016. He said he was glad the council got it done Monday.

"This is something that should have been done and over with four years ago," Scott said. "We have to celebrate history as it happened, and not as people imagine it happened."

He said the discussion is part of the country's grappling over "the legacy of systemic racism and oppression."

The council also voted Monday night to give final approval to [legislation that would rename the Columbus Obelisk monument](#) in Herring Run Park as the “Victims of Police Violence Monument.” It too now heads to the mayor’s desk.

Young also has not said whether or not he intends to sign this bill. Police Commissioner Michael Harrison has said [he’s concerned that the monument](#) would be near a memorial to fallen officers.

These two pieces of legislation are just the latest revolt over Columbus' place in history. This summer, protesters toppled a marble statue of Columbus in Little Italy and dumped it in the Inner Harbor.

The demonstrators who [tore down the statue July 4](#) said they were demanding the removal of all monuments “honoring white supremacists, owners of enslaved people, perpetrators of genocide and colonizers.”

Italian American Organizations United Inc., the group that gave the statue to Baltimore in 1984, fished the pieces back out of the water and has been working to restore it — though it won’t be returned to the city.

An officer of the group, Bill Martin, said he understands some people’s views on Columbus have changed, but that for many Italian immigrants, the explorer was a figure they could look up to when they moved to America.

Regarding the Columbus Day change, he said he wishes the City Council would instead dub the day a celebration of Italian heritage.

“We know we need to be flexible with the times,” he said.

Appendix G

Christopher Columbus statue near Little Italy brought down, tossed into Baltimore's Inner Harbor

By Colin Campbell and [Emily Opilo](#)

Baltimore Sun

Jul 04, 2020 at 11:52 pm

A crowd of shouting protesters yanked down the Christopher Columbus statue near Little Italy, dragged it to the edge of Baltimore's Inner Harbor and rolled it with a splash into the water as fireworks went off around the city on the night of the Fourth of July.

Dedicated in 1984, the statue is the latest monument in the U.S. to fall this year during the national reckoning over racism and police violence that also has toppled statues of Confederate figures and enslavers around the country.

The debate drew renewed attention to Baltimore's Christopher Columbus memorials — including one in Herring Run Park believed to be the nation's oldest. The legacy of the 15th-century Italian explorer, who had long been credited by history textbooks as a hero who discovered America, has come under fire over his violent enslavement of native people.

The torn-down Columbus statue is part of a “re-examination taking place nationally and globally around some of these monuments and statues that may represent different things to different people,” said Lester Davis, a spokesman for Democratic Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young, on Saturday night.

“We understand the dynamics that are playing out in Baltimore are part of a national narrative,” Davis said. “We understand the frustrations. What the city wants to do is serve as a national model, particularly with how we've done with protesting. We've seen people who have taken to the streets, we have supported them. We are going to continue to support it. That's a full stop.”

The Columbus statue was dragged down as people marched across the city Saturday demanding reallocation of funds from the police department to social services, a reassessment of the public education system, reparations for Black people, housing for the homeless, and the removal of all statues “honoring white supremacists, owners of enslaved people, perpetrators of genocide, and colonizers,” according to a flyer.

Davis said he did not know whether police officers were ordered to allow the statue to be torn down. But he made clear that protecting statues was not a priority of the city police department in the face of homicides and other violent crime.

“Our officers in Baltimore City, who are some of the finest in country, they are principally concerned with the preservation of life,” the mayor's spokesman said. “That is sacrosanct. Everything else falls secondary to that, including statues.”

City Council President Brandon Scott issued a statement Saturday night saying he suggested former Mayor Catherine Pugh remove the Columbus statue in 2017 when she ordered the [removal of several Confederate monuments](#) in the city following a violent conflict in Charlottesville, Virginia.

“I support Baltimore’s Italian-American community and Baltimore’s indigenous community. I cannot, however, support Columbus,” Scott said.

A spokeswoman for the Baltimore Police Department could not be reached immediately for comment Saturday night.



Police maintained distance for much of the protest, which included a march through Fells Point and Harbor East as restaurant patrons dined outdoors on a busy Saturday night. The group stopped briefly outside restaurant Ouzo Bay, which has been come under criticism following a

June incident in which Black mother Marcia Grant and her 9-year-old son, Dallas, [were denied service at the restaurant](#). Protesters cheered and applauded patrons who walked out of the eatery in response to their presence.

Weaving among modern apartment buildings and upscale grocery stores, chanting “Black people used to live here,” the group made its way back to the vacant pedestal where the Columbus statue had stood just an hour earlier and applauded their work to take it down.

“This is the only way we can stop hatred,” an organizer bellowed across the crowd.

Carved in Italian Carrara marble, the toppled statue was owned by the city and [dedicated on Oct. 8, 1984](#) by former Mayor William Donald Schaefer and President Ronald Reagan.

The statue showed Columbus facing east along Eastern Avenue into the rising sun, the direction from which his boats arrived in the New World. A wreath-laying ceremony has long been held in Columbus Piazza, the area around the statue, before the annual Columbus Day Parade, which was replaced by a new Italian Heritage Festival in 2019.

[[Baltimore’s Columbus monuments drawn into debate as memorials fall around the country](#)]

Republican state delegates and Italian-American activists held a press conference at the statue last month to ask Gov. Larry Hogan and Young to [preserve and protect the memorials](#), following activists’ comments about pulling down the monuments themselves and the introduction of a City Council bill this week to rename one of them in honor of victims of police violence.

The toppled statue is one of three monuments to Columbus in Baltimore.

There’s another statue of the explorer that stands in Druid Hill Park, and a 44-foot obelisk dedicated to Columbus in Northeast Baltimore’s Herring Run Park — erected in 1792 to honor the 300th anniversary of his journey from Europe — is believed to be the first monument in the country to honor him.

Baltimore City Councilman Ryan Dorsey, a Democrat, has sought to rename that 228-year-old monument since 2017, when a video circulated of a man [taking a sledgehammer to its base](#). Dorsey surveyed neighbors at the time to gather input on how the monument could be renamed to better represent “current-day values.”

His bill, which has not yet received a hearing before the council, would rename the obelisk as the Police Violence Victims Monument.

The debate over the presence of the monuments follows renewed nationwide protests decrying systemic racism and police violence against Black people, prompted by the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, who died last month [after an officer knelt on his neck for nearly 9 minutes](#).

Appendix H



Columbus Center
701 East Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.234.8800
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www.imet.usmd.edu

RENAMING THE COLUMBUS CENTER COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Meeting on 1 September, 2021; 9:00 am to 10:00 am

Attendees: Russell Hill (chair) (Executive Director, Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET)); Curtis Bennett (Director of Equity and Community Engagement, National Aquarium); Terry Cook (Senior Associate Vice President for Administrative Services, UMBC); Jeanette Davis (IMET alumna); Monica Gellene (Associate Director, UMCES-IMET); Miranda Judd (President, IMET Graduate Student Association; William Narden (Assistant Professor, Horn Point Laboratory, UMCES); Molly Pickel. Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications and Outreach Coordinator, IMET); Kevin Sowers (Associate Director and Professor, IMET); Gerardo Vasta (Professor, IMET, University of Maryland Baltimore).

Apologies: Dana Moore (Baltimore City Chief Equity Officer)

The meeting started with Introductions. Russell Hill provided a brief background and context. IMET is a research center within the University System of Maryland (USM). IMET is a partnership between three universities, University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB), University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES). IMET is the major occupant of the Columbus Center (CC) which is owned by the USM and managed by UMBC. IMET's Executive Director reports to a Governing

Council comprising Chancellor Perman and Presidents Hrabowski (UMBC), Jarrell (UMB) and Goodwin (UMCES). The next meeting of the IMET Governing Council is on Tuesday 26th October. Also, the IMET Executive Director receives guidance and advice from the IMET Program Committee that includes senior faculty and leaders from all three universities. The Program Committee next meets on Thursday 9th September and will be updated about today's Committee meeting. The Program Committee provides an opportunity to receive input from constituencies within the universities.

Russell Hill summarized the key points in the Charge to the Committee. Russell has sought informal advice from President Kurt Schmoke (University of Baltimore), previously Mayor of the City of Baltimore (1987-1999) at the time the Columbus Center was built. Russell let the Committee know that President Schmoke had advised that the state and local elected officials who represent IMET's area should be given them advanced notice of the change. Russell suggested that Senate Leader Bill Ferguson and Delegate Brooke Lierman, both of whom know IMET well, would be appropriate State leaders to inform. Russell will seek advice from Committee Member Dana Moore on informing City leaders. Timing of this contact with elected leaders needs to be carefully considered. The final report from this Committee will be presented to the three Presidents who will then consider whether to move the issue forward to a sub-committee of the USM Board of Regents, for possible later consideration and a final decision by the full Board of Regents.

Russell Hill provided the Committee with a brief history of the Columbus Center and the name. The building was built to accommodate the growth of the Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB), the predecessor to IMET and to contribute to the growth of Baltimore as a life sciences community. Key people behind the building were Rita Colwell, the previous President of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, Stan Heusler, editor of Baltimore Magazine (later President of the Columbus Center Development Inc.) and Bob Embry, President of the Abell Foundation. Key support came from Senator Barbara Mikulski. The Christopher Columbus Center for Marine Research and Exploration

was dedicated in October 1991. The name was meant to evoke the spirit of exploration but also capitalize on the fundraising potential in 1992 of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landfall Quincentenary of 1492. COMB moved into the building at the end of 1995. The CC included the Christopher Columbus Hall of Exploration (under the tent area) that rapidly went into financial difficulties and was bankrupt by 1998, at which point the USM became the owner of the building.

Steps taken so far towards renaming include internal discussions over the past year. The IMET faculty, the Graduate Student Association and "Et als." (postdoctoral associates and research technicians) all overwhelmingly support a name change. A petition was signed by 66 members of our IMET community, a majority, including faculty, staff and students, supporting the statement "*We, the undersigned, who work and study in the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology or are affiliated with the USM and work in the Columbus Center, request that the name "Columbus Center" be removed from the USM building located at 701 East Pratt Street.*". See Appendix 1 for full petition text and signatories. Russell also brought to the Committee's attention an article in the UMBC Retriever by their editorial board, July 5, 2020. "...while UMBC has generally been quick to make changes to our campus life when it comes to racism and hate speech, a UMBC-managed building in the heart of the Inner Harbor shares the name of a racist, xenophobic figure." (Appendix 2). Russell pointed out that support from the IMET community was not unanimous. The only opposition so far was in the form of an anonymous letter to the IMET Director pointing to "cancel culture" and including the statement "As Executive Director of IMET, housed in the Columbus Center, you have the unique opportunity to stand in opposition to the mob. You have an opportunity to stop, or at least to slow a Maoist Cultural Revolution here in the United States."

The Committee discussed the historical record and perceptions of Christopher Columbus. The changing perceptions of Columbus were introduced by viewing a video from Vox (<https://youtu.be/fNqOGhDMm8k>), a source that Ad Fontes media assesses as reliable, somewhat left leaning but reasonably balanced.

Russell provided additional material to the committee prior to the meeting (see references). It is clear that the general perception of Columbus in the US is changing. This is reflected in a growing movement nationwide to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Baltimore City Council voted unanimously in 2020 to make this change.

The Committee agreed that the name “Columbus” on IMET’s building has clearly become divisive. The name may hinder IMET’s mission of research, education and economic development in which IMET needs to engage with diverse stakeholders, in particular in attracting students from diverse backgrounds. IMET endeavors to make the workforce in environmental sciences more representative of the general community in which we live. It was pointed out that symbols and names can be very triggering and that renaming the Columbus Center provided an opportunity for alignment of the building name with the values of IMET and the University System of Maryland. The committee discussed the need to listen to marginalized voices and have a name that brings people together rather than divides them. One of the points in the Committee’s charge is that the building name “must serve the university for the long term, not just a particular moment”. In fact, the original naming of the building was linked to the Quincentenary of Columbus’s landfall to help with fund-raising and does not serve the university in the long term.

The question was raised as to whether the Committee should propose a new name. Russell responded that he had been advised that this should be a two-step process, with removal of the name “Columbus” being considered as Step 1. The Committee recommended that the building simply be known after the major occupant, as the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology, as an interim step. It was suggested that the Committee make clear our preference for the building to be named after a scientist and scholar with links to the University System of Maryland when a new name is considered. The primary name discussed was the “Colwell Center” after Rita Colwell. It was pointed out that re-naming of the building may be an important fund-raising opportunity even though

this should not be a driving factor since the new name must “serve the university for the long term”.

The Committee discussed next steps and agreed to meet again in the near future, likely before the end of September, for discussion of any additional points that members would like to raise after reflection on today’s discussion.

Appendix 1. Resources provided to the committee.

The following material was provided to the committee as background material.

History.com.

Kubal, T. 2008. Cultural movements and collective memory: Christopher Columbus and the rewriting of the national origin myth. Palgrave Macmillan. New York.

Lunenfeld, M. 1992. What shall we tell the children? The Press encounters Columbus. *The History Teacher* 25:137-144.

National Public Radio. 2011. Interview with historian William Fowler.
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=141164702>

Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. Changing images of Columbus. Vanderbilt University. https://www.vanderbilt.edu/rpw_center/_archived-letters/columbus.htm

Roos, D. Christopher Columbus: How the explorer’s legend grew-and then drew fire. <https://www.history.com/news/columbus-day-statues-italian-american-controversy>

Vox. Why the U.S. celebrates Columbus Day.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNqOGhDMm8k>





BOARD OF REGENTS

SUMMARY OF ITEM FOR ACTION,
INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

TOPIC: Convening Closed Session

COMMITTEE: Committee on Advancement

DATE OF MEETING: December 1, 2022

SUMMARY: The Open Meetings Act permits public bodies to close their meetings to the public in special circumstances outlined in §3-305 of the Act and to carry out administrative functions exempted by §3-103 of the Act. The Committee on Advancement will now vote to reconvene in closed session. As required by law, the vote on the closing of the session will be recorded. A written statement of the reason(s) for closing the meeting, including a citation of the authority under §3-305 and a listing of the topics to be discussed, is available for public review.

It is possible that an issue could arise during a closed session that the Committee determines should be discussed in open session or added to the closed session agenda for discussion. In that event, the Committee would reconvene in open session to discuss the open session topic or to vote to reconvene in closed session to discuss the additional closed session topic.

ALTERNATIVE(S): No alternative is suggested.

FISCAL IMPACT:

CHANCELLOR'S RECOMMENDATION: The Chancellor recommends that the BOR vote to reconvene in closed session.

COMMITTEE ACTION: DATE: 12.1.2022

BOARD ACTION: DATE:

SUBMITTED BY: Leonard Raley (raleys@usmd.edu) 301-445-1941



BOARD OF REGENTS

SUMMARY OF ITEM FOR ACTION,
INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

STATEMENT REGARDING CLOSING A MEETING
OF THE USM BOARD OF REGENTS

Date: December 1, 2022

Time: 11:00 am

Location: The University System of Maryland

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE A SESSION

Md. Code, General Provisions Article §3-305(b):

- (1) To discuss:
 - (i) The appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or
 - (ii) Any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.
- (2) To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals with respect to a matter that is not related to public business.
- (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.
- (4) To consider a preliminary matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State.
- (5) To consider the investment of public funds.
- (6) To consider the marketing of public securities.
- (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter.
- (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.
- (9) To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations.

- (10) To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussions would constitute a risk to the public or public security, including:
 - (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and
 - (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans.
- (11) To prepare, administer or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination.
- (12) To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct.
- (13) To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.
- (14) Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiation strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

Md. Code, General Provisions Article §3-103(a)(1)(i):

- Administrative Matters

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED: Consideration of a request to rename a building after individuals and/or company.

REASON FOR CLOSING: To maintain confidentiality of personal information concerning individuals who are proposing to have a building named after them at an institution (§3-305(b)(1)(i) and (2)).
