



**Chancellor Robert L. Caret's Update
on Diversity and Inclusion Issues**
September 7, 2016

As institutions across the University System of Maryland (USM) welcome students for the new academic year, I am taking this opportunity to provide a brief update on recent activity taking place to advance the USM's leadership on an issue impacting higher education across the country. In a [statement](#) issued late last year, I reaffirmed the USM's long-standing commitment to embracing the ideals of diversity, inclusion, and fairness on all our campuses. In addition—in acknowledgement of a nationwide resurgence of campus activism surrounding these issues—I outlined the mission of a newly established USM Board of Regents Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion.

During the past several months, the workgroup members solicited input from every USM institution and every constituency in the shared-governance matrix. The perspectives of students, faculty, staff, and campus leadership were all included in this process. The result was honest and open dialogue regarding the diversity of faculty and staff, the level of campus-wide cultural understanding, and the composition and training of campus police forces. In addition, participants considered the inherent tension that exists between establishing “safe spaces” for students and promoting broad-based inclusion, as well as the overarching importance of academic freedom and freedom of expression that makes a college campus a true place of learning and growth.

It is also important to note that while the workgroup facilitated these conversations, the panel presentations and discussions with students, provosts, and vice presidents for student affairs all took place before the **full** USM Board of Regents. Then-Chairman James Shea wanted to ensure that the issues and concerns at the heart of diversity and inclusion were heard and fully understood and internalized by every regent as the USM considered possible strategies going forward. James Brady, the 2016-17 board chair, shares this commitment.

The efforts of the Regents Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion have led directly to the establishment of a USM Diversity and Inclusion Council. This new council, with all USM institutions and constituencies represented, will carry this important work forward while maintaining open communication. Using a data-driven approach, the council will develop and administer a “campus climate survey,” inventory current campus activities, measure the actual impact of diversity and inclusion efforts relative to goals set, and establish accountability metrics.

These efforts will not be easy and results will not be immediate, but as we examine best practices, implement new strategies, and reaffirm our systemwide commitment to diversity and inclusion, we will see real progress. In addition, we fully expect that meaningful and robust—and at times uncomfortable—discussions will continue on our campuses in many forums.