



## Report on USM Student Council Activity

November 25, 2013

### USMSC Meeting at University of Maryland, College Park Summary:

We were greeted and welcomed by Dr. Stewart Edelstein.

The undergrad breakout session discussed the student regent selection progress and gave updates on campus initiatives.

The graduate breakout session discussed a national call Congress day on December 4<sup>th</sup>. This day would be a part of a larger campaign called #GradsHaveDebt2. This campaign is to raise awareness in Congress the effects of recent policy changes to graduate student loans and their interest rates. Including the higher interest rate caps for graduate student loans and that graduate student can no longer take out subsidized loans.

During the full council meeting, we had an in depth discussion to clarify the lawsuit from the HBCUs against the State. With Joann, Samim and MHEC student commissioner Robb Wilmot present the situation facts were discussed and there was a healthy conversation about the implications. Next, there was a presentation from a VA, DC and MD group called the Young Invincibles trying to raise awareness about the impact of the ACA on students. We also discussed our federal lobby day plans and asks talked about below.

Lastly, we held elections for the vacant President position. There was one nomination and Jesse Fox, the current acting President and USMSC VP-Graduate Affairs, was elected to the President position. This left the USMSC VP-Graduate Affairs position vacant. We convened the graduate students again and elected William Nathan Jr. from Bowie state to the USMSC VP-Graduate Affairs.

One area of concern for the executive board was the low turnout of council members present. One thing which we think would help the situation is for all members of the council to get reimbursed for travel to and from the meeting sites.

### MOST Initiative Update:

The MOST Initiative Workshop was held on November 5<sup>th</sup>, which was a great success with 65 participants from across the state. Participants included Faculty, Library Staff, Bookstore Staff, and a publisher. Six participants signed up during the workshop for the spring pilot program. We are limiting the pilot program to about 30 classes to make collecting data feasible. For those who sign up for the spring pilot program, there will be another workshop in January devoted to best practices when using open source textbooks.

#### USMSC Federal Lobby Day Update:

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, nine representatives from the council meet with office staff from Congressmen Harris, Van Hollen, and Cummings offices and staff from Senator Mikulski and Cardin's offices were also present. This event culminated with Congressman Hoyer attending and had a round table discussion. Topics which were discuss include: the HEA Reauthorization, pell grants, subsidized graduate student loans, lowering both undergrad and grad loan interest rate caps to previous rates, and a policy to protect unpaid interns from sexual harassment. Presently most states do not protect this group from sexual harassment (only Oregon and D.C.).