



Board of Regents ~ Committee on Education Policy and Student Life

Minutes Public Session

The Committee on Education Policy and Student Life (EPSL) of the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents (BOR) met virtually (via Zoom) in public session on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Regents Gourdine (chair), Edwards, Gooden, Johnson, Leggett, Malhotra, Sansom, Schulz, and Wood. Chancellor Perman was also present.

The following were also in attendance on Zoom: Dr. Alvarez, Dr. Andersen, Ms. Bainbridge, Dr. Beise, Dr. Bishop, Dr. Boughman, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Cooledge, Dr. Foust, Dr. Goodman, Dr. Hurte, Dr. Jiru, Dr. Kelley, Dr. Lee, Dr. Lewis, Dr. Lilly, Dr. Mathias, Mr. McDonough, Mr. Muntz, Dr. R. Murray, Dr. Niemi, Dr. Olmstead, Dr. Perillo, Dr. Perrault, Ms. Pomietto, Dr. Rous, Dr. Shapiro, Dr. Travis, Dr. Ward, Ms. Wilkerson, Dr. Young, Dr. Zimmerman. Guests also participated via the public, listen-only line.

Action Items

New Academic Program Proposals

Coppin State University: Master of Science in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

Dr. Leontye Lewis, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Mintesinot Jiru, Chairperson, Department of Natural Sciences, presented the proposal to create a Master of Science (M.S.) program in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (AMBB). The M.S. in AMBB is designed to provide an opportunity for science majors in Maryland and elsewhere to pursue graduate education, enable career advancement with specialized knowledge, increase earning potential, life-long learning, and enhance professional networking. This program will facilitate understanding of advanced concepts in biochemistry and molecular biology and help in developing interdisciplinary and integrative abilities required to solve real-world problems in the field of applied biochemistry and molecular biology. The program will also prepare students to work in teaching and/or research positions in both public and private sectors. The AMBB program will prepare students to either pursue PhD programs or seek employment opportunities in the biomedicine, biotechnology, healthcare, and pharmaceutical industries. Introduction of the graduate and certificate program in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry is proposed with the intent to attract more minority students to pursue advanced science degrees, that are required for what has been projected, by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as some of the most rapidly growing job markets.

In response to questions from Regents Malhotra and Wood, the presenters noted that the program design process included a thorough review of programs within the state that are similar and could cause concern for duplication. Coppin feels comfortable that the proposed program is unique in its interdisciplinary nature and does not compete with similar programs in the state, which are focused on one discipline. Dr. Antoinette Coleman reinforced that Coppin has done its due diligence by conducting a state-wide examination of programs to try to ensure there is no duplication. Dr. Boughman noted that this proposal has gone through the standard review and approval process with USM institutions having time to submit objections. Via the USM process, there were no objections and no concerns about duplication. However, via the process conducted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, other institutions in the state will have the opportunity to object to the establishment of this program. Chancellor Perman added his support for this program, especially with it being established at Coppin and with the potential for it to help increase the number of African Americans in STEM.

The Chancellor recommends that the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposal from Coppin State University to establish a Master of Science in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry. The motion was moved by Regent Johnson, seconded by Regent Wood, and passed unanimously.

Vote Count: Yeas: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Coppin State University: Master of Science in Polymers and Materials Sciences

Dr. Leontye Lewis, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Mintesinot Jiru, Chairperson, Department of Natural Sciences, presented the proposal to create a Master of Science (M.S.) in Polymers and Materials Sciences (PMS) program. The PMS program meets social needs including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at CSU and the city of Baltimore. The proposed program is designed to give students an understanding of design, synthesis, characterization, and function in a large number of materials. Students will receive an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the structure and properties of materials. This program will address the need for students in the inner city of Baltimore to have greater access to obtaining graduate degrees. The program will ensure equal opportunity for Maryland's diverse citizenry through education and by creating a pipeline to graduate degrees that will increase the number of minorities in the field. The proposed PMS graduate program will address the local and state-wide workforce demand, which, according to the Maryland Department of Labor, will be over 6,000 workers by 2024. Graduates of this program will fill the critical need for trained labor by government agencies and manufacturing companies. Additionally, surveys indicate that current undergraduates within existing biology and chemistry programs would be interested in obtaining the new degree and that Coppin's graduates within the natural sciences desired to remain at the university and pursue relevant graduate degrees if they were available.

In response to an inquiry from Regent Malhotra, the presenters noted that there is important work with polymers and complex materials being done with the Department of Defense and partnerships and agreements are being explored. Chancellor Perman recommended the Coppin team also explore a partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore's School of Dentistry, which also works with materials and materials sciences. This proposal has gone through the standard review and approval process with USM institutions having time to submit objections. Via the USM process, there were no objections. It is noted that, via the process conducted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, other institutions in the state will have the opportunity to object to the establishment of this program. However, the USM staff believes the institution has done its due diligence regarding a state-wide examination of programs to try to ensure there is no duplication.

The Chancellor recommends that the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposal from Coppin State University to establish a Master of Science in Polymers and Materials Sciences. The motion was moved by Regent Johnson, seconded by Regent Malhotra, and passed unanimously.

Vote Count: Yeas: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

University of Maryland Eastern Shore: Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media Studies

Dr. Nancy Niemi, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Dean Cooleage, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of English and Modern Languages, presented the proposal to create a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Digital Media Studies. The program, proposed to begin in the fall semester of 2021, is designed to provide students with the critical knowledge and skills necessary to gain employment and to advance to leadership positions in an industry that is in the midst of a complete upheaval of traditional business models, production methods, and distribution platforms as a result of society's rapid transition to digital, multi-screen, mobile media delivery systems. The curriculum includes foundational coursework including an immersion in the industry's unique style of writing, hands-on video and audio production in both the studio and the field, the basics of computer-generated graphics, and an understanding of media law and ethics. Because digital media is a global industry, students will also be required to complete courses in one of the foreign languages offered by the university's Department of English and Modern Languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish. This is a logical culmination of what was originally called the "telecommunications" curriculum, which has been offered within the department for several decades and currently is offered as a Digital Media minor, and those students have shown interested in this new degree. The program will produce graduates who will be viable candidates for entry-level media positions across a broad cross-section of industry segments such as a production assistant in a broadcast newsroom, an account assistant in a public relations firm, a videographer in a commercial production house, or a social media coordinator. UMES hopes to afford underrepresented students an opportunity to pursue a structured yet dynamic educational program that focuses on the media and entertainment industry while also supporting the industry with a well-qualified, diverse pool of

applicants who can participate at the highest level of decision making within global media companies. The program will directly target new and emerging media technologies. Students will explore the digital integration of information and entertainment as traditional media business models are rendered obsolete and the industry adapts to a global marketplace.

In response to questions from Regent Sansom, the presenters clarified that UMES is working with WorWic Community College to create transfer pathway possibilities with a related certificate program at the community college. Additionally, while it's possible that this program will have a negative impact on the number of English majors, the creation of this and similar programs is part of a movement to offer creative and more relevant major options, as, nationally, the number of English majors has been declining for a while. This proposal has gone through the standard review and approval process with USM institutions having time to submit objections. Via the USM process, there were no objections. It is noted that, via the process conducted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, other institutions in the state will have the opportunity to object to the establishment of this program. However, the USM staff believes the institution has done its due diligence regarding a state-wide examination of programs to try to ensure there is no duplication.

The Chancellor recommends that the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposal from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to establish a Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media Studies. The motion was moved by Regent Wood, seconded by Regent Johnson, and passed unanimously.

Vote Count: Yeas: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Cultural Diversity Progress Reports

Dr. Zakiya Lee, Assistant Vice for Academic and Student Affairs, presented this report to the committee. Effective July 1, 2008, the Maryland General Assembly required each institution of postsecondary education to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity among its students, faculty, and staff. Annually, each institution shall submit its plan through its governing body for review. Subsequently, the governing body shall submit to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) a progress report regarding the institutions' implementation or improvement of their plans. Dr. Lee summarized the USM summary, which highlights the following sections of institutions' submissions:

Section 1: Institutions' summary statements include major goals, areas of emphasis, strategies for implementation, challenges, successes, and an explanation of how progress is being evaluated. They were also asked to indicate where continued improvement is needed.

Section 2: Examples of how institutions are working to increase the numerical representation of traditionally underrepresented groups among students, administrative staff, and faculty

The two themes seen across USM institutions include: (1) targeting underrepresented students via a variety of recruitment and retention efforts including partnerships with high schools, community colleges, minority-focused organizations and college access groups and (2) focusing on the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and advancement of underrepresented faculty and staff

Section 3: Examples of how institutions are encouraging inclusive interactions and cultural awareness

Efforts include institution-sponsored diversity and inclusion courses, training, and workshops; the creation or elevation of senior-level diversity officers, councils, and workgroups; as well as programming and other efforts led by student organizations

Section 4: Examples of strategies that have proven most successful in increasing the diversity of faculty and staff

Strategies focus on all aspects of the recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and advancement of underrepresented faculty and staff being done at the institutional level and within colleges and departments and administrative units. Dr. Lee shared details of Maryland's AGEP PROMISE Academy

Alliance, which was generated to develop, implement, self-study, evaluate, and disseminate a state-level model to increase the number of historically underrepresented minority tenure-track faculty in the biomedical sciences. UMBC, UMB, UMCP, Salisbury, and Towson are members of the alliance whose model includes recruiting and onboarding postdoctoral scholars, supporting them through professional development and mentoring, and converting these scholars into tenure track positions within the University System of Maryland. Beyond the five partner institutions, other USM institutions have been privy to lessons learned from the Alliance. Despite consistent focus, this is where continued much progress is still needed.

Section 5: Campus statements regarding the process for the reporting of campus-based hate crimes as consistent with federal requirements under the Clery Act

All institutions are in compliance with their reporting to the federal government and have processes in place that offer a number of methods by which individuals can report hate crimes and hate bias incidents. Campuses have MOUs with local law enforcement to help ensure that any crimes can be reported and responded to quickly by both internal and external police or security forces. Additionally, several institutions provide education about hate-bias incidents to members of the campus community.

Regents and Chancellor Perman noted/asked/discussed:

- USM's recent initiation of the framework, [Toward Racial Equity and Social Justice](#), that will guide our examination of and work to combat structural racism, should be described in the opening of the report
- Data on staff should be disaggregated by level (i.e., entry-level staff, administration, etc.) and tracked for progression
- Appears that faculty/staff diversification and degree completion progress is being made at a slow rate
- The extent to which current faculty are engaged in and dedicated to faculty diversification efforts
- We must deal with all levels of the pipelines and grow the pool from which USM could welcome diverse students, faculty, staff into our communities
- Accrediting bodies are paying more and more attention to diversity and inclusion indicators. The challenges USM faces are not unique; they are national issues. Although USM institutions have not been cited for diversity and inclusion-related violations, scrutiny may be increasing, and we can get ahead of it
- Campus climate assessments, surveys, and data gathering tools from the Education Advisory Board and the National Survey of Student Engagement help provide indicators to be examined to understand the extent to which campuses are welcoming and inclusive

Where possible, insight was offered by USM staff and campus provosts and vice presidents for student affairs. USM staff will explore the issues and questions that were posed. Additional information can be found in the meeting materials.

The Chancellor recommends that the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life recommend that the Board of Regents approve the 2020 Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity Annual Progress Report for submission to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Vote Count: Yeas: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Information Items

Fall 2020: Preparation for Teaching, Learning, Campus Life, and Student Success

Months of work, planning, collaboration, and strategizing have gone into planning the Fall 2020 semester. The regents have consistently been engaged in the process with USM officials who have led a number of stakeholder groups to establish critical decision points and plans. Today, Dr. Joann Boughman led a panel including vice presidents for student affairs, Dr. Dane Foust (Salisbury University) and Dr. Patty Perillo (University of Maryland, College Park); provosts, Dr. Melanie Perreault (Towson University) and Dr. Nancy Niemi (University of Maryland Eastern Shore); and Drs. Antoinette Coleman and MJ Bishop from USM's Office of Academic and Student Affairs and the Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation, respectively. Panelists provided additional perspectives on Fall

2020, as each institution and the USM strive to ensure quality teaching, learning, and campus life in the safest manner possible. Highlights include:

- USM OnTrack partnership fueled by UMGC's donation of their CARES Act money to ramp up online instruction and learning, which is happening via expanded professional development, support for new technologies, and increasing capabilities of campus teaching and learning centers for instructional design support
- Significant work done by and partnerships established among and between enrollment management, registrars, financial aid, admissions, and transfer executives who have put in thousands of hours to bring in and help retain the students who we need to do our work
- Thousands of hours of faculty work over the summer (off-contract and unpaid) to be prepare for fall including being directly responsive to feedback from students regarding ideal teaching and learning dynamics; hopeful that lessons learned will extend beyond the pandemic to ensure permanent improvements in teaching and learning
- Monumental work by many offices on campus along with partners across the state to help slow the spread of COVID by engaging in massive testing efforts including tracking and following up on required prearrival tests and implementing continued testing protocols once community members arrived on campus
- Serious concerns about the mental health of all with special focus on students, many of whom are part of a generation tied to electronic devices with compromised social and coping skills
- Some survey results show cause for concern as students express the degree to which the pandemic is affecting their mental health and, quite possibly, their ability to stay in school and complete their degree
- The challenge of major social and health disparities that stem from the pandemic. For example, (1) faculty can telework while many the staff members who keep our institutions running cannot and (2) technology issues and living situations make it difficult for some students and faculty to teach or learn from home.
- Most students are complying with campus, local, and state masking and social distancing guidelines.
 - Many institutions have asked students, faculty, and staff to sign pledges expressing their dedication to following such guidance;
 - For students, institutions have tied following such guidelines to student conduct processes, and students are being removed and receiving other consequences if guidelines are violated
- Student leadership is also engaged in developing plans and communicating with the campus community, as student government associations and student athletes have provided videos and social media posts to remind their peers to follow safety guidelines
- The goal is to create an environment that supports and keeps everyone safe with hopes that the institutions can keep as many people on campuses as possible, because these professionals have found that there are a number of barriers that make it hard for some students to do their best work remotely
- All hope to stay the current course as much as is safely possible

Report on Academic Program Actions Delegated to the Chancellor, 2019-2020

This item was postponed until the November 3, 2020 EPSL meeting.

Voter Engagement Across the USM

Dr. Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice Chancellor for Education and Outreach, briefly shared highlights of a variety of efforts in which the USM is engaged around voter engagement:

- Each institution has outreach to the students and staff to encourage voter registration, and every institutional website includes a link on the home page directing students how to register to vote
- Student organizations are working on voter registration and get out the vote activities
- Sharing of election judge recruitment and information sharing via a special request from the state officials
- Engagement with the USM Student Council to share information and encourage student leaders to further encourage their campus peers
- Creation of a Civic Engagement Student Leadership Committee, with student representatives nominated from each institution

Education Policy and Student Life Tentative Agenda, 2020-2021

The Tentative Agenda for 2020-2021 comprises anticipated action items, including new academic program proposals and new Board of Regents policies, as well as information and discussion items. Some of the information items are reported on an annual schedule to ensure that the regents are well informed about topics of general interest (e.g. enrollment projections, campus crime reporting, financial aid), while others respond to specific requests for reports and recommendations on a variety of topics of interest to the Committee as previously noted by the regents.

In the interest of time, Chair Gourdine asked committee members to review the proposed agenda and to share feedback and ideas with herself, Dr. Joann Boughman, or Dr. Zakiya Lee.

Action Item

Motion to Adjourn

Regent Gourdine called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Regent Wood, seconded by Regent Malhotra, and unanimously approved. Regent Gourdine adjourned the meeting at 12:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Regent Michelle Gourdine
Chair