



The Board of Regents Committee on Economic Development and Technology Commercialization

Minutes of the Public Session

December 2, 2020

The Committee on Economic Development and Technology Commercialization of the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents met in public session on 12:30 pm on December 2, 2020 virtually. Regent Leggett called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm.

Regents present were I. Leggett (chair), N. Sansom, E. Fish, G. Attman, S. Malhotra, B. Gossett, R. Rauch.

USM personnel present were J. Perman, T. Sadowski, L. Ryan, E. Herbst, J. Boughman, and T. McDonough.

Others present were A. Delia and S. Sheppard.

Featured Start-Up: Aeon Technologies (Information Item)

Vice Chancellor Sadowski introduced Al Delia, Vice President for Regional Development and Engagement at Frostburg State University. Mr. Delia explained that the partnership began 2.5 years ago with her desire to expand her company to Western Maryland. They are glad to say they are now located on their campus. They have been great partners and have been great in helping with COVID testing. They have great hopes and aspirations for their partnership in the future. Ms. Brown explained how from a project as an intern, she acquired a government contract and started Amethyst Technologies. She explained Amethyst's strengths and capabilities. She described how they started off as an engineering company and have developed deep expertise in global health. Amethyst had a history of working in diagnostics, quality assurance and vaccine manufacturing, which prepared them for today's challenges. They wanted to expand from bwtech@UMBC to Frostburg, so a year ago, they started Aeon Technologies at Frostburg State University. Initially they were going to set up for a wide array of analytical testing. They pivoted due to COVID into a clinical lab that is providing results to clients, including Frostburg State University, in no more than 24 hours. Ms. Brown is graduate of the University System of Maryland, and this is the second company she is starting in partnership with USM. They have hired USM graduates and interns. Allegheny County provided seed funding to make the job possible via grants to support job creation in Western Maryland.

Regent Leggett asked if they are looking at other places around the state that they are looking at, and Ms. Brown responded that they were. Her new partners bring strength to that. Regent Malhotra congratulated Mr. Brown on graduating from the 8A program and seeing success. He asked if she has looked at State of Maryland contracts to provide support services. Ms. Brown said they are more familiar with federal procurement than state procurement. Regent Malhotra said that services provided in rural areas are a big deal for the state. Other organizations like charities do not include what Amethyst provides. Mr. Perman expressed his appreciation for Ms. Brown's assistance to Frostburg

State. He asked if they are thinking about antigen, point of care, antibodies testing as it evolves. Ms. Brown said they are expanding and at the forefront in understanding the latest technologies available.

Global Pandemic Prevention and Biodefense Center & BioHealth Capital Region Update and COVID Response – Rich Bendis, President & CEO of BioHealth Innovation, Inc, (Information Item)

Mr. Bendis explained that region was ranked #6 in terms of U.S. Biopharma clusters and is now #4. The goal is to be #3. He explained that Maryland is playing a pivotal role in the coronavirus pandemic. There are positive trends in venture capital investment and wet lab space, though they will still need more space. He applauded the Maryland Momentum Fund. He reviewed the Connected DMV as an organization and the Center, specifically, and the challenges and opportunities. An integrated approach would mean getting out in front of pandemics. The Center would provide a way to connect than doing physical research, because the universities and industry are where the research should happen. They will start with antibody research to rally around. They are in the process of performing a Steering Committee, for which Dr. Perman and Secretary Schulz have agreed to participate. They are in a 6-month strategy/planning phase to begin implementation in Summer of 2021. The only formal academic collaboration at this time is with the USM because they believe the USM will be critical.

Regent Leggett asked why they are not looking to the federal government funding for the planning phase, and Mr. Bendis answered they are prioritizing federal support for research down the road. Chancellor Perman said they are happy to be central in this effort, and connecting is the way to overcome these pandemics.

USM Office of Economic Development Update – Tom Sadowski, Vice Chancellor for Economic Development (Information Item)

Vice Chancellor Sadowski added more information on BioHealth Assets from a USM perspective and provided an update on the USM COVID Research & Innovation Task Force, including a public health communications challenge that will launch soon. Regent Leggett suggested that university and other athletes can be great influencers for that cause. He reviewed rankings, including the Milken Study, Princeton Review/Entrepreneur Magazine, and Maryland Future 20.

Regent Leggett commented that working together as an entire System and with the private sector will allow for even greater progress moving forward. Mr. Sadowski said combining efforts with UMB and UMCP in terms of research has been a great example. Regent Gossett said that public information campaigns around this great information are needed, and he also applauded ways to work collaboratively within the state and across the region. He also agreed that MPower is a great example, and there could be opportunities to work outside the state. Vice Chancellor Sadowski commented about funding and being a part of the Maryland Marketing Partnership, some of which has pivoted to talk about strengths in relation to COVID. Chancellor Perman said that what he has learned in recruiting industry is that if we project ourselves as user-friendly, industry wants to come. We have to be able to demonstrate our assets. Even things like using library facilities, core labs, etc., can be valuable in creating partnerships.

The meeting ended at 1:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Isiah Leggett, Chair
Committee on Economic Development
and Technology Commercialization