



USM Board of Regents
Committee on Education Policy and Student Life and Safety
Minutes from Public Session
May 14, 2024
Zoom

Minutes of the Public Session

The Committee on Education Policy and Student Life and Safety (EPSLS) of the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents (BOR) met virtually (via Zoom) in public session on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. The meeting was convened at 9:31 a.m. Committee members present were: Regents Smarick (vice chair), Gooden, Helal, Leggett, Parker, and Wood. Chancellor Perman and Senior Vice Chancellor Alison Wrynn were also present.

The following were also in attendance on Zoom: Dr. Acquaaah, Dr. Allen, Dr. Alvarez, Dr. Amoussou, Ms. Bainbridge, Ms. Bannerman, Ms. Beckett, Dr. Caraco, Dr. Clark, Dr. Cooper, Dr. Esters, Ms. Feagin, Dr. Graves, Dr. Haverback, Sr. Vice Chancellor Herbst, Dr. Jenkins, Dr. Khademian, Vice Chancellor Lawrence, Dr. Lee, Dr. Marano, Dr. Masucci, Dr. Mueller, Dr. Owens, Dr. Sanford, Dr. Shapiro, Dr. Shumba, Dr. Skevakis, Ms. Sule, Dr. Taylor, and Dr. Whitehead.

Guests also participated via the public, listen-only line.

Vice Chair Smarick welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that he would be chairing the meeting in Chair Gourdine's absence. He remarked that it is Regent Helal's last EPSLS meeting, as her two-year term as a student Regent is coming to an end. He asked her to say a few words about her plans for the future. She said that she will be taking a gap year and then will attend the Teachers College at Columbia University. Regent Smarick thanked her for her time on the Committee.

Action Items

Academic Program Proposals

Bowie State University: B.S. in Virtual Reality and Gaming

Dr. Guy-Alain Amoussou, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. George Acquaaah, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Rosemary Shumba, Chair, Computer Science, presented Bowie State University's proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science in Virtual Reality and Gaming. The program prepares students to meet a need for a growing industry. It takes an interdisciplinary approach and will help address diversity in the gaming industry.

Regent Gooden noted how important degrees like this are in the military and defense industries. Regent Wood asked if there was any plan for this program to expand into gambling. Dr. Wrynn noted that virtual reality and gaming are being used in education, as evidenced on a recent trip to Arizona State University.

The proposal has gone through the standard review and approval processes 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 Education Policy and Student Life and Safety Committee recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposal from Bowie State University to offer a B.S. in Virtual Reality and Gaming.

The motion was moved by Regent Smarick, seconded by Regent Helal, and unanimously approved.

Vote Count: Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Proposed Amendments: II-1.00 – Policy on Appointment, Rank, and Tenure of Faculty

Dr. Candace Caraco, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, presented the proposed revisions to II-1.00 – Policy on Appointment, Rank, and Tenure of Faculty. Two years ago, the USM provosts discussed a proposal at an institution for a new series of teaching titles for non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty members. This would provide clear promotion pathways for NTT faculty. The taskforce to review this policy included provosts, a CUSF representative, and USM staff. The titles were added to the policy and there were a number of technical edits.

Regent Gooden asked if we have a group looking at the entire tenure process. Dr. Caraco noted that the USM policy is quite general, but the campuses can provide more specificity. Dr. Wrynn stated that campuses keep an eye on their policies regularly. Regent Smarick said that there have been some interesting issues concerning tenure and asked if other activities should be more heavily considered in the tenure process. Chancellor Perman said there have been discussions at the presidential level.

The Chancellor recommends that the Education Policy and Student Life and Safety Committee recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposed edits to II-1.00.

The motion was moved by Regent Smarick, seconded by Regent Wood, and unanimously approved.

Vote Count: Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: 2024 Cultural Diversity Reports and Beyond

Dr. Zakiya Lee, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, presented this report to the Committee. In 2008, a law was passed that required each institution of postsecondary education to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity among its students, faculty, and staff. That law required that each institution annually submit its plan and a progress report to its governing body for review and, subsequently, to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Every year, before submitting our institutions' reports to MHEC, they come through this Committee and, subsequently, the full Board for approval. Although it's not required for MHEC, we create a

USM summary to identify themes and to highlight a few of the institutions' responses in order to contribute to our understanding of what's happening system wide. In addition to submitting their Cultural Diversity Plan, institutions had to respond to the following prompts:

Section 1: A summary of the institution's plan to improve cultural diversity as required by Education Article §11-406

Section 2: A summary of how the 2023 Supreme Court decision to strike down race-conscious admissions practices has affected your campuses policies and practices around outreach and support programs, community engagement, equity and access, and monitoring and evaluation.

Institutions were also asked to respond to the following USM addendum:

Please provide a summary of efforts to address the unique needs of the international student population. Please include, but you need not limit your answer to, what staff and/or offices are specifically dedicated to international students, three pressing challenges for this population and what is being done or is needed to address those challenges, and one recent significant achievement or point of progress for the population.

Dr. Lee offered highlights of each section and noted that all institutions have complied with the reporting requirements. A USM summary precedes the campus reports and offers more details.

Regent Smarick asked how global events of the past year have affected campus climate. Dr. Lee said that information is not in these reports, but we have had many conversations with the campuses. We'll continue to check in with the campuses and ensure that students are able to practice their rights while being safe.

The Chancellor recommends that the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life and Safety recommend that the Board of Regents approve the 2024 Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity Annual Progress Report for submission to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

The motion was moved by Regent Smarick, seconded by Regent Leggett, and unanimously approved.

Vote Count: Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0

Information Items

Strategic Plan Update: Alternative Credentials and Innovative Pathways

Dr. Alison Wrynn, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, presented an update on the USM's strategic plan, Vision 2030: From Excellence to Preeminence. Her presentation focused on two goals:

- Goal 1.7: Pilot innovative pathways for working professionals that respond to workforce demands
- Goal 2.3: Develop innovative education programs resulting in new credentials

Dr. Wrynn presented an overview of the action plan for these two goals and how the USM plans to move forward with implementation.

Regent Wood asked if the strategic plan includes elements for participation with the community colleges. Dr. Wrynn noted that she had a meeting with the Maryland Association of Community Colleges. The full plan does include collaboration with several groups, including community colleges.

Regent Smarick noted that it could be a good way to think about P-20 activities. Dr. Shapiro said that we currently collaborate with community colleges on the teacher pipeline. Regent Leggett said that a challenge in Maryland is that we have a large number of teachers coming from other states and we want to make sure they're meeting our standards.

Campus Safety and Security Report

Dr. Zakiya Lee, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, presented the campus safety and security report. She started by outlining current things that the USM is doing to address these issues including: a state-wide safety summit, a presentation at the BOR retreat, and safety vignettes at full Board of Regents meetings. She covered the data of the report which includes crime data required by the Clery Act and the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Dr. Lee said that most universities are in full compliance with the Clery Act and that there are audits when there are discrepancies.

Regent Wood asked if Maryland first responders are working on the same radio frequency and said we should keep that in mind as we're looking at campus safety and security.

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Status Update: Test Optional Status Across the USM

Dr. Candace Caraco, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, presented an update on test optional status across the USM. The Board of Regents formalized the policy in 2022 that allows USM institutions to adopt test-optional policies in their admissions process, if they wish. The general report from the campuses is that it is too early to make definitive statements about the policy change, but admission applications and enrollments do not seem to have suffered. Early retention figures do not seem to show a clear impact.

Regent Smarick said that we expected a positive effect on enrollment and asked if there was one. Dr. Caraco did say that enrollment was up. Regent Smarick also asked about how making the test optional affects diversity, etc. Dr. Caraco said that most of our students come from in state, so this doesn't affect

us in the same way that it affects the Ivies. Dr. Wrynn said that we'll keep an eye on the data and what similar systems are doing.

Update: PreK-20 Initiatives

Regent Smarick opened this item by noting that it was Dr. Nancy Shapiro's last EPSLS meeting, as she's retiring this summer after almost 30 years. He congratulated her and wished her well on behalf of the Committee.

Dr. Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice Chancellor for Education and Outreach, shared a report on the P-20 outreach over the past year. The P-20 work encompasses partnerships between USM and USM institutions; the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission; the Maryland community colleges and independent colleges and universities; and the Maryland Public Schools. The work of the P-20 office aims to address Maryland's most pressing education problems.

Dr. Shapiro shared some highlights from the past year. A new Director of the Maryland Center for Computing Education, Quiana Bannerman, started recently. The Civic Education and Community Engagement Council was established in January 2024 and includes representatives from all USM institutions, including student leaders. She provided an update on the Maryland's ABCs for Student Success grant, which was awarded in September 2023 and aims to improve retention, graduation, and sense of belonging among underserved students at USM universities. Dr. Shapiro presented highlights of teacher education at our campuses, discussed P-20 policy initiatives, and ended by reflecting on her almost 30 years of P-20 work in Maryland.

Chancellor Perman noted how all of this work represents systemness and helps the USM become more competitive, attract more funding, etc.

2024-2025 Agenda Brainstorming

Regent Smarick noted that the annual agenda for the Committee includes many standard reports, new academic program proposals, and other anticipated information items. She and the USM Academic and Student Affairs Office team meet during the summer to plan next year's agenda, but she offered this opportunity for committee members to share ideas they believe warrant attention by the Committee. Ideas included:

- A look at the tenure process
- Quality of life in residential housing
- Teacher shortage issues including what's happening, how the strategic plan and Blueprint aim to address, and our role in fulfilling the pipeline
- Humanities
- Honors Colleges
- Importance of civic education in the undergraduate curriculum
- P-20 update as a recurring matter to the Committee
- Test optional update next May
- Campus climate surveys
- Healthcare education

- Regional Higher Education Centers

Regent Smarick encourage committee members to keep sharing their ideas.

Motion to Adjourn

Regent Smarick thanked everyone for a productive meeting. He called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Regent Gooden, seconded by Regent Wood, and unanimously approved. Regent Smarick adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully,

Regent Andy Smarick
Vice Chair