Maryland's Public University System

Maryland's Future Is Here

University System of Maryland

University System of Maryland

From the Chancellor

This year, a spotlight shone on U.S. higher education. Leaders held up for scrutiny the broad goals of America's colleges and universities, the work we take up to achieve them, and the data that signal whether we've succeeded.

This is a good thing. This examination of mission and metrics is a good thing. Because at the University System of Maryland, we believe in accountability—to the students we enroll and to the citizens whose quality of life rises and falls on our work.

Our mission hasn't changed: To educate and serve the people of Maryland. To advance equity and opportunity. To produce the research and scholarship that change our world for the better.

In these pages, you'll see examples of these objectives in action. And you'll see evidence of the outcomes we've promised: Learners of all backgrounds who can access the education we offer. Graduates whose degrees add value and open doors. Knowledge deployed to the toughest problems we face. Communities made stronger by our engagement. A state that's more vibrant, more resilient, for its investment in us.

At the USM, we believe that public higher education is a public good. We believe that our future is Maryland's future. And with this report, it's a privilege to prove it.

Sincerely,

Jay A. Perman
Chancellor

www.usmd.edu

Maryland's Future is Here,

in the **dreams** of our students and graduates, the **ideas** of our scholars and researchers, and the **actions** of our innovators and leaders.

INSIDE

A Better World Begins With Maryland

The USM is a force for good in Maryland. Through our universities, Marylanders pursue education that transforms their lives and unlocks greater career prospects and earning potential. And the rewards of higher education extend beyond our students and graduates, beyond our classrooms and campuses. Our universities graduate skilled professionals who work in our hospitals, schools, local governments, and other organizations that improve our quality of life. Our innovators and entrepreneurs develop products and technologies that grow statewide prosperity. And our scholars and researchers make discoveries that solve local and global challenges. With the USM, the people of Maryland are changing the world, for good.

UNIVERSITIES

1. Bowie State University
2. Coppin State University
3. Frostburg State University
4. Salisbury University
5. Towson University
6. University of Baltimore
7. University of Maryland, Baltimore
8. University of Maryland, Baltimore County
9. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
10. University of Maryland, College Park
11. University of Maryland Eastern Shore
12. University of Maryland Global Campus

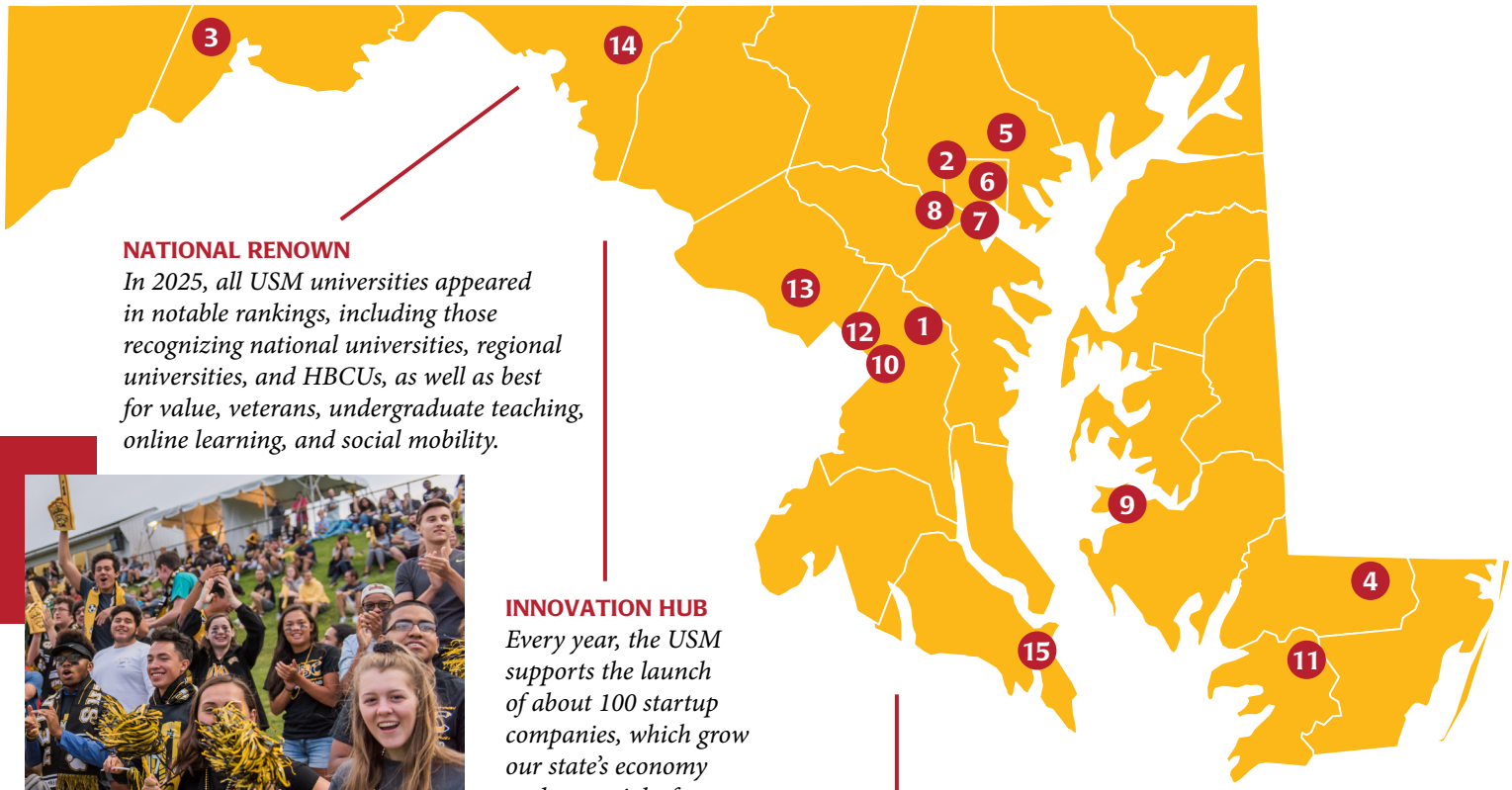
REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS

13. Universities at Shady Grove
14. University System of Maryland at Hagerstown
15. University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland

WORKFORCE FOCUS
The USM partners with local businesses and governments to prepare skilled graduates who meet the most critical workforce needs. Last year, we awarded over 3,800 degrees in health professions, 2,300 in education, 1,800 in engineering, and 10,000 in computer and information science.

RESEARCH POWER

USM universities are research powerhouses with distinctive centers of expertise in emerging and fast-growing fields, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology, quantum computing, and renewable energy.



NATIONAL RENOWN

In 2025, all USM universities appeared in notable rankings, including those recognizing national universities, regional universities, and HBCUs, as well as best for value, veterans, undergraduate teaching, online learning, and social mobility.

INNOVATION HUB

Every year, the USM supports the launch of about 100 startup companies, which grow our state's economy and create jobs for Maryland residents.

STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

Our enrollment reflects the vibrant diversity of our state with students from all 23 counties—plus students from every state and more than 100 countries. More than half of our students are people of color, and students range in age from 14 to 80-plus!

By the Numbers

In 2025, our universities faced unprecedented changes and disruptions, which challenged them to adapt, innovate, and elevate their support for students in Maryland and around the world. Despite the uncertainties, our System continued to make progress toward the ambitious goals of Vision 2030, our strategic plan. As a result, enrollment at our universities is at near-historic levels, graduation rates are climbing, and our research enterprise is counted among the best in the nation.

** Data from most recent academic year unless noted.*

Enrollment Growth

175,702
Enrollment, Fall 2025, a 2.9% increase over last fall

16,145
Fall 2025 first-time, full-time freshmen

39,165
Transfer students in FY 2025, a 20% increase over 10 years

12,138
HBCU* enrollment, 4th consecutive year of growth

*Bowie State University, Coppin State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Student Success

45,030
Total degrees awarded

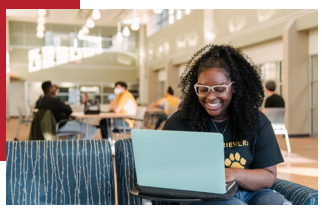
Associate's*	3,000
Bachelor's	28,521
Master's	11,430
Doctoral/Professional	2,079

**UMGC to non-Maryland residents only*

13%
10-year increase in number of degrees awarded

86%
First-year, full-time students in 2019 who returned for a second year, compared with the national retention rate of 78% for 4-year public institutions

72%
Six-year graduation rate for cohort entering in 2019, compared with a 71% national graduation rate for 4-year public institutions



VISIT OUR DATA DASHBOARDS

This report provides a snapshot of our success in areas that matter to the people of Maryland. Find detailed data on our goals, work, and progress at ***www.usmd.edu/IRIS/*** *and* ***www.usmd.edu/dashboard-indicators****.*

Affordability

$244 Million
Institutional financial aid to undergraduates FY 2024

49%
Increase in need-based financial aid to undergraduates from FY 2014 to FY 2024

50%
Undergraduates who graduated without debt

44,719
Federal Pell Grants awarded to undergraduates in FY 2024

Diversity

51%
Enrollment composed of students of color in FY 2025

31%
10-year increase in degrees earned by underrepresented minority groups in FY 2025

24%
10-year increase in enrollment by underrepresented minority groups

19%
USM faculty who are from underrepresented minority groups in FY 2025

Workforce

42,041
Employees of USM universities in FY 2025

3,838
Degrees in health care professions for FY 2025

14,816
Degrees in STEM disciplines in FY 2025

2,388
Teacher education degrees and certification programs completed in FY 2025

Research and Economic Growth

$1.81 Billion
Research and sponsored programs expenditures in FY 2024, a 41% increase over five years

9,000
People employed by companies in USM research parks

125
New startups developed with USM venture support in FY 2025

107
Patents issued to USM universities in 2025

39
Licenses and options executed by USM institutions in FY 2024

My internship and job experiences were excellent. Bowie State played a major role in helping prepare me for those opportunities.

Taj Smith
Bowie State ’25
BS, Computer Science

Maryland's Public University System

Expanding Access

The USM is committed to ensuring that all Marylanders who wish to pursue higher education have ample opportunities to do so. To be a truly student-centered university system, we are investing in the programs and resources that help more students afford, access, and achieve their education goals.

For a growing number of students, the path to higher education leads through the doors of the USM's historically Black universities: Bowie State University (BSU), Coppin State University (CSU), and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). This fall, these three HBCUs enrolled more than 12,000 students and celebrated four consecutive years of combined enrollment growth.

CSU welcomed its largest freshman class in 25 years due to new strategic initiatives. Targeted retention and mentoring efforts have achieved a 52% increase in its male student population at a time when male college student enrollment is dropping nationwide. And a new program offering in-state tuition to students from states without an HBCU has more than doubled the out-of-state student enrollment in just two years.

Both BSU and UMES have elevated research initiatives, strengthened student success resources, and expanded need-based scholarships thanks to historic gifts from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott in 2020 and again in fall 2025. In total, she has donated $75 million to BSU and $58 million to UMES, donations that will open doors and enrich the education experience of countless HBCU students in Maryland.

The power of our HBCUs shines through in the stories of their graduates—Marylanders Taj Smith, BSU '25 (left), who graduated in May with a job as a cybersecurity engineer at Adobe. He credits BSU's strong computer science program, his research and internship experiences, and resources like the Writing Center for his success. "I learned how to manage time, build confidence and prioritize."

At Coppin State, the male student retention rate exceeds both the state and national average.

Expanding Access

System Celebrates Enrollment Growth

Across the University System of Maryland, 175,702 students enrolled for the Fall 2025 semester, demonstrating Marylanders' continued confidence in the promise of higher education. The USM reached its second highest enrollment ever and the highest since before the pandemic. First-time, full-time undergraduate student enrollment increased for the fifth consecutive year, setting a new USM record at 16,145 students.

Early College Programs Build Momentum

The USM has made significant progress toward establishing a statewide early college strategy that expands access, strengthens student success, and positions Maryland as a national leader in accelerated pathways. Working with Empower Schools, a national leader in early college work, the USM completed a comprehensive landscape analysis detailing the benefits of early college, the current gaps in dual enrollment across Maryland high schools, and the strategic role USM universities will play in designing and delivering new early college pathways. Our early college work also received a boost from the National Association of Higher Education Systems, which awarded the USM two $10,000 catalyst grants: one to support early college pathways and improve advising and the other to develop teaching apprenticeship programs that strengthen pathways from high school through college to the teaching workforce.

Regional Centers Grow Presence with New Partnerships

The USM's regional higher education centers are forming new partnerships to expand access to higher education and grow the workforce. This year, the USM Hagerstown launched the University of Baltimore's prestigious MBA program in hybrid format for the convenience of Western Maryland leaders. The Universities at Shady Grove joined with Towson University and Montgomery County Public Schools to introduce a fully funded bachelor's degree program that helps current paraeducators become fully-licensed early childhood educators. The USM at Southern Maryland is also working to grow the teaching workforce and hosted the 2025 Teacher Preparation Pipeline Summit with Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's County public schools.

Autism-Inclusive Programs Earn Recognition

Towson University (TU) was recognized with an Autism-Inclusive Campus Designation™ from the College Autism Network for its commitment to create environments where neurodivergent students, faculty, and staff can thrive. A leader in autism education and community support, TU is home of the Hussman Center for Adults with Autism, which provides cutting-edge programming, training and resources for adults on the autism spectrum. Through a partnership with the Autism Society of Maryland, the Center's Autism Hiring Program helps adults navigate the job search process and become a part of the workforce.

Prison Education Programs Will Grow with Grant Support

The USM will bring together groups from across the state—higher education institutions, community organizations, elected leaders, and partners in the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services—to create greater access to higher education for incarcerated individuals and returning citizens. This effort is supported by a new $4.1 million grant by Ascendium Education Group to bolster a statewide vision for prison education programs. Two USM institutions already offer undergraduate Prison Education Program (PEP) degrees. Bowie State University offers a degree in Sociology and Certificate in Entrepreneurship, and the University of Baltimore's Second Chance College Program offers a Human Services Administration degree. Both work with students, when they are released, to continue their education on campus.

Military Students Save with Credit for Rank Program

University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) is offering military learners an accelerated path to graduation. Its Credit for Military Rank program awards academic credit based on experience and skills that service members gain as they rise through the ranks, reducing the time and tuition required to earn a degree. Leadership skills required to command a platoon are equivalent to management principles taught in the classroom, and eligible military-affiliated students receive up to 12 hours of transfer credit for their skills. More than 70,200 credits have been awarded to more than 14,291 students who saved over $17.5 million in tuition costs.

Salisbury University is a great place to start off in this career. The faculty are amazing and will support you in every way possible.

Caitlin Snider
Salisbury University
Earth Science Major

Maryland's Public University System

Supporting Student Success

Last year, USM universities awarded a record 45,030 degrees. This milestone represents years of determined work by the graduates. It also reflects our expanding efforts to support the success of all students, including first-year, transfer, and international students, working adults, and those returning to college after years away.

This fall, more than 9,300 students from Maryland community colleges transferred to a USM university. These students are a particular focus of the USM's work to advance student success. Our universities are growing their community college partnerships and enhancing mentoring programs to help transfer students make a strong start and thrive at their new university.

Two transfer students who excelled in 2025 were Caitlin Snider, an earth science major at Salisbury University (SU), and Luiz Mata Lopez, a recent graduate in computer science and mathematics at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). Both were named 2025 Barry Goldwater Scholars, an honor bestowed on just 441 students nationwide.

At Anne Arundel Community College, Snider published research on the water quality of local creeks. Upon transferring to SU, she was able to continue her research involvement and work with professors in the Department of Geography and Geosciences to map and analyze seasonal and surface temperature variations. She hopes to help communities better understand the impact of severe and hazardous weather to advance disaster prevention and recovery.

Like Snider, Mata Lopez got involved in STEM research early. While still a student at Montgomery College, he participated in a UMD summer undergraduate research experience focused on bioinformatics and data science. After transferring, he rejoined the same research group and focused on using computational methods to reveal the evolutionary steps in cancer development and progression.

Luiz Mata Lopez, UMD '25, was one of eight students across the System to be named a 2025 Barry Goldwater Scholar.

Supporting Student Success

Modernized ARTSYS Portal Helps Students Transfer with Success

To help transfer students make a strong start and graduate on schedule, the USM is leading the project to modernize and improve ARTSYS, the statewide online transfer platform. ARTSYS helps students understand how individual courses transfer between Maryland community colleges, USM universities, and other independent institutions in the state. Working with 35 statewide education partners, the USM has added about 600 program guides and hundreds of thousands of course equivalencies to the updated ARTSYS platform, creating a robust tool for mapping out a seamless path between institutions. Students can search for programs at a four-year school and see which courses are recommended to take during the first 60 credits of coursework at the community college. Working with ARTSYS and their advisors, students can ensure that every credit earned counts toward their graduation requirements.

Peer Mentoring Initiative Supports New Students

The USM's Maryland ABCs for Student Success initiative is entering its first full academic year with exciting momentum, as our universities are set to actively engage students in peer mentoring programs. During last year's pilot phase, the project successfully recruited and rigorously trained 71 dedicated student peer mentors and advocates across eight USM institutions. These mentors provided vital support, making peer mentoring services accessible to nearly 2,000 first-year and transfer students—a reach the program aims to surpass in 2025-2026. This robust foundation demonstrates the initiative's potential for fostering student success through peer-to-peer support, empowerment, and community-building across our universities.

Pell Students Achieve High Graduation Rates

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) ranks No. 13 among U.S. four-year public universities for "Colleges with the Best 6-Year Graduation Rates for Pell Students" in the 2025-26 edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education's Almanac. UMD climbed two notches in this year's list with a six-year graduation rate above 82%. Pell Grants are federal awards of aid to undergraduate students facing significant financial need; they do not require payment. The university supports students with financial need with a wide range of services from the admission process through graduation.

USM Students Honored with Competitive National Scholarships

In 2025, more than two dozen students from SU, UMBC, and UMD were recognized by some of the most prestigious, competitive scholarship programs in the nation. These scholarships provide graduate study, international exchange, or research opportunities to undergraduates with exceptional achievements in scholarship, research, and leadership.

12	Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant recipients (SU, UMBC, and UMD)
8	Goldwater Scholarship recipients (SU, UMBC, and UMD)
2	Truman Scholarship finalists (UMBC and UMD)
2	Marshall Scholars (UMD)
1	Gates Cambridge Scholar (UMD)

Six USM Universities Named Best for Vets

Military Times included six USM universities on its 2025 Best for Vets list, which recognized 350 institutions based on student success metrics, availability of military specific resources, and financial assistance. With a 75-year history of serving active-duty military and veterans, the University of Maryland Global Campus emerged as the top military-friendly university in Maryland and ranked No. 43 nationwide. Bowie State, the University of Baltimore, SU, TU, and UMD also received recognition.

College Math Tutors Help K-12 Students Become College-Ready

Students from Salisbury University (SU), Towson University (TU), and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) are among 1,000 college students statewide who are providing "high-dosage math tutoring" to K-12 students. In 2023, the Maryland State Department of Education unveiled a $28 million investment in the Maryland Tutoring Corps to enhance math proficiency statewide, especially among middle and high school students and historically underserved students. Frequent tutoring helps students build confidence, a positive attitude toward math, and feelings of connection to school. With grant support, UMBC was able to double the number of students and schools served by its existing tutoring program, Reach Together Tutoring. Ultimately, more than 80,000 K-12 students in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Wicomico County are expected to benefit from the Maryland Tutoring Corps.

Our goal is to give students the kind of industry-aligned, real-world experiences that will make them stand out as future leaders in the AI workforce.

Rosemary Shumba, PhD
Chair, Department of Computer Science
Bowie State University

Maryland's Public University System

Energizing the Workforce

The USM equips Maryland's workforce for success, providing students with the knowledge and skills to make meaningful contributions in their career fields. Our graduates become innovators who develop new products, launch new businesses, and help build a future of opportunity and prosperity for our state.

The age of artificial intelligence (AI) is here and the USM is ready for it. Our universities are integrating AI technologies with teaching, learning, and research to prepare students for industries transformed by technology.

In 2025, several USM universities launched new AI-focused courses, certificates, or degree programs. The University of Baltimore, for example, launched its new Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence for Business to prepare the next generation of leaders for AI-driven organizations.

With the Maryland Higher Education Commission and Maryland Department of Labor, Bowie State University launched a new partnership with CodePath, a nonprofit focused on making AI and cybersecurity education accessible to first-generation and low-income students.

The University of Maryland, College Park, the state's hub for AI research, now has more than 200 faculty and 18 distinct research communities focused on AI innovation and applications. One community, the Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland (AIM), cultivates interdisciplinary research collaborations that develop AI technology in ways that uplift people and society.

One notable collaboration, the RoboScout system, seeks to use AI technology to deliver aid at disaster scenes that humans can't easily navigate. Through the Maryland Robotics Center, faculty and students from computer science and several engineering departments worked to combine sophisticated AI powered base stations with autonomous drones and robot "dogs" to create a system that can rapidly collect health data and prioritize patient care.

The RoboScout team recently advanced in the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Triage Challenge, a multi-year competition involving universities and private companies.

Energizing the Workforce

Former Federal Workers Have New Pathways into the Teaching Profession

Five USM institutions received grants from the Maryland Higher Education Commission's (MHEC) Teacher Quality and Diversity Program to help former federal workers transition into the state's K-12 classrooms and fill teacher shortages. Career changers in Towson University's "Imagine: A Pathway to Teaching" program are conditionally qualified to accept teaching positions in select counties when they complete training on lesson planning, classroom management, and Maryland education standards, plus they receive a stipend and mentorship. Bowie State University offers a Master of Arts in Teaching with tracks in elementary or secondary education, or they can earn an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certificate to support significant needs in K-12 education. MHEC also awarded grants to Salisbury University; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and University of Maryland, College Park.

Record Gift Will Help Coppin State Grow the Healthcare Workforce

In April, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield presented Coppin State University (CSU) with a $6.22 million donation, the largest philanthropic gift in its history, to support initiatives that improve health care access and equity and address health care worker shortages. With these funds, CSU will renovate and expand its Community Health Center, so that it can serve more residents in the local community and provide a broader range of services. The gift also created the CareFirst scholarship program, which will support students in training to become health care professionals. Finally, the gift will be used to create a statewide coalition of Maryland higher education institutions and health care partners to share resources and streamline the pipeline from two- to four-year degree health care programs.

Google Partnership Provides Career-Enhancing Certificates and AI Training

The USM and Google announced a new partnership to provide no-cost access to Google Career Certificates and AI training for thousands of Maryland learners. All 12 USM universities will offer these industry-recognized credentials in high-growth fields like cybersecurity and

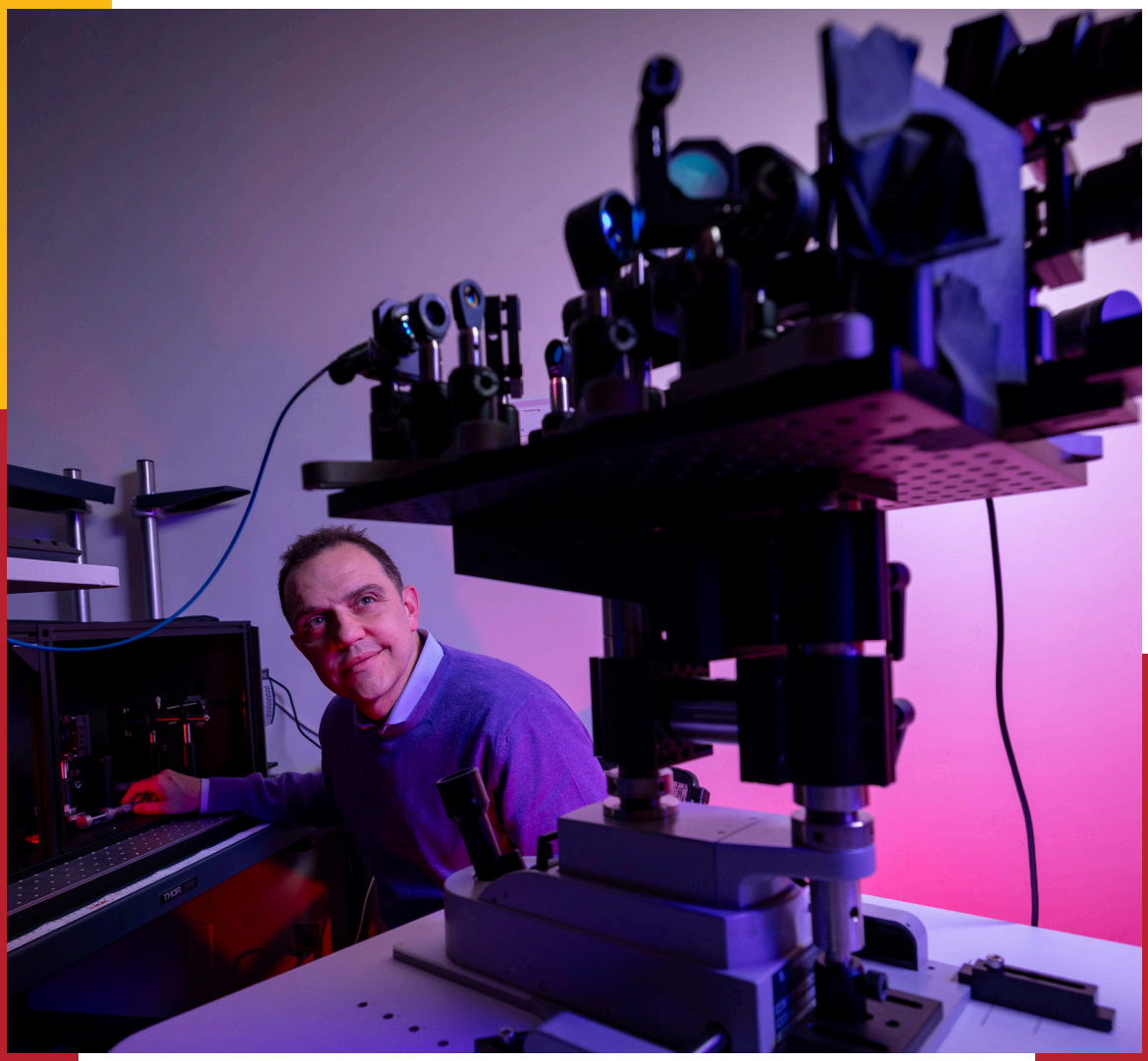
data analytics to current students, alumni, and community members. The certificates can be completed in 3-6 months without prior experience, which helps the state rapidly upskill its workforce. The partnership, led by the USM Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation and Grow with Google, underscores the value of integrating industry-recognized micro-credentials with established degree pathways to foster career readiness and lifelong learning.

Maryland Launch Fund Supports Early-Stage Ventures

In 2025, the USM Launch Fund supported 8 new start-up ventures founded by students, employees, and alumni of USM universities. The Launch Fund makes critical early capital and resources more accessible to early-stage entrepreneurs. Since 2023, through its grants up to $15,000 to USM-affiliated ventures and microgrants to USM students and employees, it has supported 39 ventures and more than 40 students. This year's grant recipients include Elastic Energy, a company launched by Samuel Bendek, a current mechanical engineering sophomore at UMBC, and his sister Juliana Bendek. Elastic Energy is pioneering the world's first battery powered by natural tree sap. The company plans to produce affordable, sustainable, and long-lasting batteries for consumers and ultimately provide large-scale energy storage to remote and off-grid communities.

New Degree Programs Respond to Changing Workforce Needs

To meet students' evolving career interests and employers' growing workforce needs, our universities constantly evaluate, adapt, and expand their courses and programs. During the 2024-2025 academic year, the Board of Regents approved 35 new degree programs proposed by our universities to address workforce trends and needs in communities across the state. One notable program that began enrolling students this fall is SalisburyUniversity's new Bachelor of Science in Coastal Engineering, the only program of its kind in Maryland—and one of just three on the East Coast. Interdisciplinary studies in engineering, physics and geosciences, combined with internships with Eastern Shore engineering firms, prepare students to protect shorelines and build resilient coastal communities. Demand for these specialized engineers is expected to accelerate, especially in areas vulnerable to coastal hazards and climate change.



We need to meet face to face with clinicians to drive the technology forward.

Giuliano Scarcelli, PhD
Professor, Fischell Department of Bioengineering
A. James Clark School of Engineering
University of Maryland, College Park

Maryland's Public University System

Discovering Solutions

Our universities are hubs of distinctive research expertise where faculty and students pursue solutions to the world's greatest challenges. Working together across disciplines, they make discoveries that improve our health, drive innovation, build stronger communities, and make our world a better place.

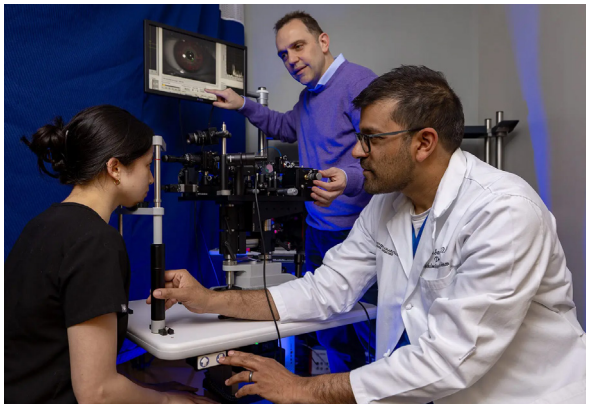
In 2025, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) continued to create powerful partnerships to accelerate medical innovations. Most notably, these universities announced a $10 million joint gift from Edward and Jennifer St. John and the Edward St. John Foundation to launch the Edward and Jennifer St. John Center for Translational Engineering and Medicine (CTEM).

CTEM engages students and faculty from the two universities in joint education, research, and technology translation to advance next-generation medical solutions. Doctors and engineers will work side-by-side at the newly opened 4MLK Building to develop new diagnostics tools, disease treatments, and ultimately patient care.

One promising research collaboration is led by CTEM's inaugural co-directors, Dr. Giuliano Scarcelli (UMD) and Dr. Osamah Saeedi (UMB). This pair is using a new microscope to monitor eye pressure and screen for glaucoma, the second-leading cause of blindness worldwide.

Scarcelli developed the microscope based on Brillouin microscopy, a light-scattering technique that measures the stiffness of tissues and cells without touching the body. His noninvasive device provides cutting-edge ophthalmologic imaging that allows physicians to better understand the biomechanical properties of the eye. Supported by a National Institutes of Health grant, Saeedi aims to use Scarcelli's microscope with his patients to identify biomarkers of glaucoma, identify risks, and develop personalized treatments.

Dr. Osamah Saeedi, professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at UMB, hopes his research will lead to earlier interventions that prevent vision loss in glaucoma patients.



Discovering Solutions

Maryland Climbs in National R&D Ranking

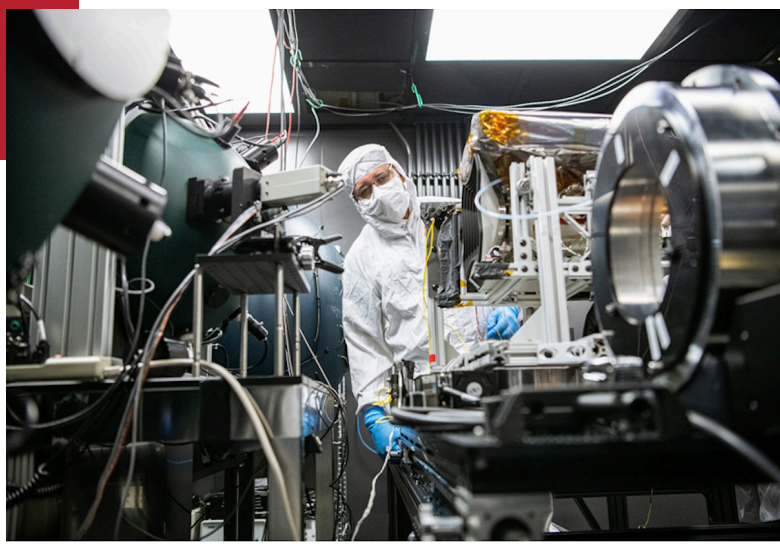
In the National Science Foundation's latest Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey, the combined research expenditures of the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park ranked 14th among U.S. universities—and 9th among public universities. Their combined R&D expenditures exceeded $1.5 billion in FY 2024.

Focused Ultrasound Offers Promise for Brain Cancer Treatment

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Dr. Graeme Woodworth is advancing the treatment of glioblastoma, the most common and deadly primary brain cancer in adults. In the brain, treatment to stop or slow the spread of cancerous cells is greatly hindered by the blood-brain barrier, a natural defense that blocks large and water-soluble chemicals, including most chemotherapy drugs. Dr. Woodworth, chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, led a clinical trial using focused ultrasound to open the barrier, enabling chemotherapeutic and nanotherapeutic agents to cross and provide targeted treatment. In the clinical trial, glioblastoma patients who received MRI-guided focused ultrasound with standard-of-care chemotherapy had a nearly 40 percent increase in overall survival.

Satellite Instrument Advances Understanding of Atmosphere and Oceans

In 2025, researchers at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) celebrated a milestone in space. Last February, UMBC's Hyper-Angular Rainbow Polarimeter 2 (HARP2) instrument marked one year orbiting Earth aboard NASA's Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE) satellite. Created with strong involvement from both undergraduate and graduate students, HARP2 collects detailed data from a survey of the entire globe every two days. Unlike other satellites, HARP2 can distinguish whether particles in the air are smoke, dust, or pollution. Its unique "hyper-angular" views provide 3D-like detail that scientists at UMBC and around the world are using to better understand climate patterns, air quality, natural disasters, and other Earth systems.



Researchers Investigate Salt Water Intrusion and Solutions

Salt contamination of freshwater is a global problem threatening both safe drinking water and coastal farmland productivity. At the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), Dr. Ming Li *(pictured right)* co-led an international study on salt water intrusion funded by the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research. He joined with researchers at 20 U.S. and international universities to synthesize research and publish a report on the causes of salt contamination in tidal rivers worldwide, the consequences for humans and aquatic ecosystems, and recommendations for monitoring, prevention, and mitigation.

At the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Dr. Naveen Kumar Dixit, assistant professor of horticulture, leads a study investigating ways to help farmers cultivate salt-tolerant crops in affected soils. His research has identified salt-tolerant soybean varieties that can help minimize economic losses on farms and prevent soil erosion.

Capital of Quantum Initiative Launches in College Park

A new public-private partnership between the State of Maryland, the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD), and quantum leader IonQ will position the state and university as global leaders in quantum technology. Part of Gov. Wes Moore's economic growth agenda, the "Capital of Quantum" initiative will accelerate quantum research and innovation by attracting up to $1 billion in investments. The university,

scientists and engineers, will gain new resources to recruit additional faculty, expand education programs, and construct new facilities to support its quantum ecosystem. IonQ plans to add a new data center and laboratories to its corporate headquarters in UMD's Discovery District and double its Maryland workforce over five years.

Grant Creates New Appalachian Innovation Institute

The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded Frostburg State University (FSU) a three-year, $400,000 grant to support the launch of the Appalachian Innovation Institute, an innovation hub that will connect FSU's applied research with economic impact throughout Western Maryland. The award is one of the largest NSF research investments in FSU's history and serves as a national model for how rural public universities can drive technological advancement and economic transformation. Research will target emerging technology areas critical to regional and national competitiveness—artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing—and expand FSU's reach into the Washington-Baltimore innovation district and the Pittsburgh AI and robotics hub.

It hurt when the bridge went down. So when the opportunity came along to apply for this internship, I jumped on it.

William McConnell
(pictured center)
UMBC
Mechanical Engineering Major

Maryland's Public University System

Moving Maryland Forward

USM universities have long-standing partnerships and strong connections to their neighboring communities with local agencies, businesses, and service organizations. Civic education, service, and internship opportunities encourage our students to become engaged citizens and use their knowledge, talents, and leadership skills to strengthen the communities that mean so much to them.

When flash flooding caused extensive damage to Westernport Elementary in Allegany County in May 2025, nearly 300 students and staff were displaced from the school. Within hours of the flood, Frostburg State University (FSU) came forward with a plan to allow Westernport students to finish their school year on the FSU campus.

FSU staff and faculty across departments worked together to provide spaces where the students could have class, recess, and meals, which were provided by FSU's new food service vendor. Campus police, the facilities and athletic departments, the bookstore, and even the FSU mascot, Bob E. Cat, were involved in the effort to house these students and make them feel at home.

When Maryland's communities are challenged, our students are also eager to contribute to the solution. This summer, students from both University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and University of Maryland, College Park were among 10 students selected to contribute to the work to rebuild critical infrastructure through the Key Bridge Rebuild Internship Program, a partnership between the Maryland Transportation Authority and the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Through this paid summer internship, UMBC students Emily DiMarzio, William McConnell, and Cristian Mena visited the bridge construction site and received hands-on experience in project management, environmental analysis, construction oversight, and community outreach. These interns also developed a hands-on workshop for Baltimore middle school students to learn about bridge design while building math skills.

FSU mascot Bob E. Cat welcomes students from Westernport Elementary to campus.

Moving Maryland Forward

NextGen Program Develops Future Public Service Leaders

The University of Baltimore is investing in the next generation of public service leaders for our state. In 2022, the university's Schaefer Center for Public Policy launched the NextGen Leaders for Public Service Program to inspire students from all majors to pursue public service careers through academic programs, co-curricular activities, and paid internship experiences. Last year's graduating class included 60 graduates who had completed NextGen internships, and the program continues to grow. As of December 2025, NextGen students have had more than 600 internship placements at state, county and municipal agencies and nonprofit organizations and have contributed more than 100,000 public service hours.

Grant Supports Effort to Recruit and Train Maryland Poll Workers

During the last presidential election, our universities' students helped ensure fair and efficient elections by serving as poll workers. In 2024, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission awarded a $78,521 grant to the USM, the only public university system in the U.S. to receive a competitive Help America Vote grant. These funds supported recruitment and training efforts involving seven USM universities and reaching over 100,000 students via print and digital communication. Across the USM, 482 students completed poll worker training workshops. Collaborating with more than 30 partners, including Baltimore Votes, Power the Polls, and the Maryland State Board of Elections, the USM connected these students with opportunities to serve, especially in counties that had last-minute needs for poll workers.

Eastern Shore Pathways Initiative Addresses Need for Rural Health Practitioners

Nearly the entire Eastern Shore is designated as a Medically Underserved Area by the federal government. To improve health care access and outcomes on the Eastern Shore, the University of Maryland School of Medicine at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) established the Rural-MD Scholars Program to train and place medical students in rural health care settings. Rural-MD Scholars receive full-tuition scholarships in return for a commitment to practice

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