



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* MARYLAND

Friday, December 18, 2020
Report to the USM Board of Regents
Chancellor Jay Perman
AS DRAFTED

Thank you, Chair Gooden. And let me once again thank all of you for your efforts on behalf of the USM and the students we serve. As we approach the holiday season—and the completion of the fall semester—the members of this board, our presidents and institutional leaders, and our faculty and staff can take great pride in the work we’ve undertaken together. As we look forward to the coming spring semester, I know I can count on each and every one of you to continue this important work.

I thank Dr. Jing Liu for his presentation on the COVID-Related Learning Gap and the Higher Education Pipeline. His presentation is an important reminder that the impact of COVID will continue to challenge us well into the future—and those challenges will involve far more than our health.

In a few minutes, I’ll give what should be my final COVID update of the year. But first, while it’s been only a few weeks since we last met, there’s been no shortage of news across the System that I’d like to share.

I will begin with Dr. Gregory Fowler being named the next president of the **University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)**. Dr. Fowler has been with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) for the past nine years, serving as president of SNHU’s Global Campus since September 2018. He is the right leader—at the right time—for UMGC, and I look forward to working with him. I thank Regent Sam Malhotra and the members of the presidential search committee, I thank Dr. Larry Leak for his service as interim president, and I thank Javier Miyares for his eight years leading UMGC to enormous success.

I want to note that when he takes office in January, Dr. Fowler will be the sixth new USM leader I’ve welcomed in my first year as chancellor. Last May, Anthony Jenkins began his tenure as president of **Coppin State University (CSU)**; in July, Darryll Pines became president of the **University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)**; in September, it was Bruce Jarrell formally taking over the presidency at the **University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)**; in October, Anne Khademian began her service as executive director of the **Universities at Shady Grove (USG)**; and earlier this month, Eileen Abel became the inaugural executive director of the **University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM)**.

So, what I’d like to say is—that’s enough for now! No more changes for a while. Freeman, that means no cabinet posts in the Biden administration for you! In all seriousness, I thank all of our leaders—old and new—for your commitment to higher education in Maryland, to the USM, and to the students we serve.

Earlier this week, we received news that philanthropist MacKenzie Scott is making transformative gifts to **Bowie State University** (BSU) and the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** (UMES), two of Maryland's preeminent Historically Black Institutions. The gifts—\$25 million to Bowie State and \$20 million to UMES—are among the largest unrestricted gifts ever awarded to an institution within the USM. This incredible generosity is particularly meaningful now, in the midst of a pandemic that disproportionately harms students of color, students in poverty, and first-generation students. Bowie State and UMES are national leaders in advancing education equity, and they have long graduated students who are a source of strength to the state and the region. These gifts will allow the universities to increase financial aid for students, invest in academic programs and innovations, and expand the institutions' endowments, enabling long-term stability and growth. I congratulate UMES and Bowie State on these historic gifts.

In other impressive news, **University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)** senior Sam Patterson was one of 32 U.S. students awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship this year. Sam is a Meyerhoff Scholar and a member of the Honors College; he's a triple major at UMBC and will receive two BS degrees—one in math; one in statistics—and a BA degree in economics this spring. He'll study the economics of transportation at the University of Oxford next year.

Congratulations are also due to UMBC for winning Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic's 2020 Engaged Campus Award for its work as a community-engaged, civically engaged university. In addition, Dr. Chris Rakes and Dr. Michele Stites in UMBC's Department of Education have together won a \$3 million NSF grant to transform undergraduate teacher preparation programs in secondary mathematics. And while I know President Hrabowski prefers that UMBC accolades go to his people, I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to commend Freeman, himself, and his wife Jacqueline for volunteering to take part in the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine trial at UMB's School of Medicine. This decision to serve as an example, persuading people in general—and people of color in particular—that they can trust the science behind the vaccine, will make a real and meaningful difference. Thank you, Freeman.

Of course, we're all thrilled that the Moderna/NIAID vaccine being tested at the University of Maryland School of Medicine just yesterday gained FDA approval for emergency use. Vaccine approvals are the first real sign of hope we've had since the pandemic began. But the UMB clinical trials represent just one front on which the university is waging the battle against COVID-19. For the second time this year, UMB's School of Nursing has approved an early exit for nursing students so that they may bolster Maryland's nursing workforce. In all, 182 nursing students who were scheduled to graduate yesterday—Dec. 17—were, instead, approved for exit on Nov. 30.

And, as you know, UMB continues to serve its Baltimore City neighbors. UMB's Office of Community Engagement, in collaboration with the Foundry Church, is once again providing West Baltimore families holiday gifts at steeply reduced prices. Each year, UMB's Community Engagement Center transforms into a Christmas pop-up shop, where West Baltimore residents can pick up presents for just a few dollars apiece and share in the joy of gift-giving over the holiday season.

Towson University (TU) is also helping meet the critical need for nursing professionals; 51 nursing graduates—two-thirds of the winter 2020 graduating class—opted to leave early and join the workforce. With COVID surging, these and all of our frontline health care workers deserve a special measure of appreciation. Additionally, Towson recently celebrated the largest single donation from an alum in the institution's 154 years—a \$5.3 million gift from Dr. Fran Soistman Jr., class of 1979. The gift will be used to support the College of Health Professions, the College of Business & Economics, TU athletics, and programming to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Generosity was also on display at the University of Maryland, College Park, as Phillip and Elizabeth Gross announced a \$6.8 million gift to the university. The gift allows expansion of the Incentive Awards Program. The program, which currently reaches students in Prince George's County and Baltimore City, will now include five freshmen from Montgomery County who will be awarded four-year scholarships.

I'm also pleased to note that UMCP's Student Government Association is redistributing more than \$400,000 to help classmates during the pandemic. The money will support the school's crisis fund, train students to respond to mental health emergencies, and fight food insecurity. In addition, for the sixth consecutive year, UMCP has attained a top 10 ranking in *The Princeton Review's* annual survey of the Top Schools for Entrepreneurship. In the 2021 rankings, UMCP is sixth for undergraduate entrepreneurship education overall and third among all public universities.

UMGC has also had some exciting philanthropy news recently, as alumna Bonnie Broh-Kahn and her husband recently established endowment funds through a \$1 million bequest to the university. The gift provides funding for scholarships as well as support for the Student Aid Fund for Emergency Relief to help students facing financial hardships. And in other news, last month the new U.S. Naval Community College (USNCC) announced that UMGc was one of five institutions nationwide chosen to help launch the college as it prepares to welcome its first students next year. UMGc will help shape USNCC's course design, student support services, and transfer credit policies.

Two Bowie undergraduates captured first place at the International Business Agility Labs: Accounting Competition, hosted by the Center for Global Business at the University of Maryland Smith School of Business. Included in the competition were teams from Maryland, Ghana, and Hong Kong. Also at BSU, Dr. Julius Davis—an Elkins Professor for both 2020 and 2021—was honored with Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic's Early Career Engaged Scholarship Award, recognizing his work launching the Center for Research & Mentoring of Black Male Students & Teachers.

At the **University of Baltimore (UB)**, seven finalists have been announced for the 2020 Attman Business Pitch Competition. More than three dozen UB students—undergraduates and graduates—representing a wide range of academic backgrounds and disciplines, submitted applications for their enterprising ideas. A team of judges representing the Baltimore startup ecosystem narrowed the pool down to seven businesses for the live finale, to be held virtually on January 19 and hosted by UB's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

As some of you may know, earlier this month—for the first time in its 50-year history—Maryland Public Television (MPT) dedicated a week to spotlighting Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The USM's three HBCUs—Bowie, **Coppin State University (CSU)**, and UMES were featured. MPT also hosted CSU President Anthony Jenkins and members of his leadership team on its weekly political program, *State Circle*, to talk about the importance of HBCUs and how Coppin's soon-to-graduate health care students will help lead the fight against COVID. Coppin, UMES, and UMBC were also among six partnering universities that received a five-year, \$6.8 million NASA award to nurture students in the STEM fields.

The **University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)**, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, released the first-ever “report card” for U.S. coral reefs. The report is a resource for communities and decision-makers throughout the nation, starting a dialogue about the various contributors and potential solutions to the threats affecting these vulnerable

resources. In addition, UMCES launched its first edX professional certificate course—Science for Environmental Management. The course will help UMCES develop the next generation of scientists, business leaders, policymakers, and educators who are better equipped to meet environmental challenges of the 21st century.

In addition to the transformative gift mentioned earlier, UMES has received some impressive honors recently as well. President Heidi Anderson has been elected to a three-year term on the board of directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Dr. Lakeisha Harris, dean of the School of Graduate Studies, was selected to serve on the HBCU Contracting Competitiveness Academy, a year-long White House pilot program intended to help HBCUs better compete for federal contracting opportunities. And UMES alumnus James Akinola, a combat medic assigned to Fort Jackson in South Carolina, was recently named the 2020 U.S. Army Soldier of the Year.

In other honors, I want to acknowledge Dr. Mary DiBartolo, professor of geriatric nursing at **Salisbury University's** (SU) School of Nursing, who was recently inducted into the American Academy of Nursing's 2020 Class of Fellows. The induction recognizes Dr. DiBartolo's extraordinary contributions to the nursing profession. Also at SU, senior Jessica Pierce was named a finalist for the prestigious Marshall Scholarship. If selected, she would be the first SU student to earn the honor, allowing her to travel to the University of Edinburgh to pursue a PhD in neuroscience with a focus on epilepsy research.

Thanks to action taken by this board last month, two **Frostburg State University** (FSU) campus buildings will now honor the history and legacy of Frostburg's African American community. A new residence hall will be known as Brownsville Hall, honoring the largely African American community that was displaced between the 1920s and the 1960s as FSU's campus footprint grew. And the Lincoln School—the site of a one-room, segregated schoolhouse for Brownsville residents—will become the Adams/Wyche Multicultural Center at the Lincoln School, thanks to a generous gift from FSU alumni Sandra Wyche Adams, class of 1986, and Tyrone Adams, class of 1987. While honoring its past, FSU is also looking toward the future, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony welcoming the first tenant—Delmock Technologies—to the Advanced Technology Center at Frostburg State University. Frostburg was also honored by Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic, as the FSU Student Government Association was awarded the 2020 Excellence in Service Student Group Award.

As Dr. Abel settled in as executive director at USMSM, there was some exciting news out of Southern Maryland. A heat sanitization box designed and developed by entrepreneurs at the St. Mary's County TechPort—a UMCP-managed business incubator that also supports USMSM—is providing critical assistance to frontline health care workers. The Semi-Automated Heat Bioburden Reduction Module—or “Hot Box”—capable of decontaminating 24,000 masks daily, was featured in a policy announcement on Dry Heat by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

In other news from USM's higher education centers, the **Universities at Shady Grove** (USG) held its 11th Annual Scholarship and Donor Recognition Celebration. The virtual event honored more than 650 scholarship recipients and donors, including private donors, the USG Board of Advisors, local businesses, foundations, community organizations, individuals, and state legislators.

And just last week, I had the pleasure of taking part in the **University System of Maryland at Hagerstown's** (USMH) annual Feaste at Yuletide scholarship fundraiser. The virtual Feaste & Frolic event raised nearly \$50,000 in scholarship support for USMH students.

And, finally, across the System, our USM family and friends came out in force to support students facing financial hardship during COVID. Donations poured into the institutions' student emergency funds, and by year's end, those donations totaled \$2.4 million Systemwide. This generosity among our friends is such a blessing.

In other business, I have the [USM's 2020 Annual Report](#) to share with you.

As you'll recall, last June I delivered a report that focused on the recently concluded academic year, highlighting institutional accomplishments across the System. Today, I have the pleasure of presenting the USM's full Annual Report, outlining our Systemwide success.

The progress we've made in priority areas is clearly and concisely conveyed. The report highlights our commitment to access and affordability as well as quality and completion. It also showcases the USM's impact on workforce development, company creation, and economic growth. In addition, it outlines our efforts to create a culture of philanthropy, promote sustainability, practice good financial stewardship, and foster equity, inclusion, and civic engagement. The report is available online right now, but once it's printed, I'll make sure everyone gets a copy.

Regents, as we close out 2020, with two COVID vaccines having now secured FDA approval, I know we're filled with hope that this is, indeed, the beginning of the end of this pandemic. At the same time, we know we have several more difficult months ahead of us, and, as COVID cases and deaths spike, we must continue our fight to end this virus and keep our people safe.

Without question, the USM is **deeply** engaged in this fight.

Just yesterday, the COVID vaccine developed by Moderna and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases gained FDA approval for emergency use. This is a milestone for the world, yes, but it's also a milestone for us—for the University System.

UMBC alumna Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett and her colleague Dr. Barney Graham led the team of scientists at NIAID who helped develop the Moderna vaccine. When asked about the involvement of Black scientists in vaccine development, Dr. Anthony Fauci proudly acknowledged Dr. Corbett. Is there any more powerful endorsement of our educational mission?

Our involvement with the Moderna vaccine doesn't stop with Dr. Corbett. The School of Medicine at UMB led clinical trials of the vaccine to determine safety and efficacy, enabling its quick approval—and saving countless lives.

Dr. Jarrell marked his first day as UMB president by taking part in the vaccine trial—to show his confidence in the vaccine and to set an example for those who might be skeptical of it.

Dr. Hrabowski and his wife Jacqueline also took part in the trial—expressly to highlight the urgent need for African Americans, Latinx, and other people of color to participate in medical studies.

Without doubt, there is justified distrust of a vaccine among communities of color. This nation's history of medical research, and medical interventions, on Black and Brown people, on Indigenous people, is appalling. But these are the very communities that are being disproportionately harmed by COVID. These are the very people we need to save. There's simply no alternative.

I'd have you look at the System's institutional leadership. Of 12 USM presidents, more than half are Black women and men. We have the opportunity to send a message to our communities that this is a life-or-death proposition. And we can do it from a place of empathy and understanding. Because our presidents do understand the distrust, the skepticism. And, when a vaccine is available for public use, they've pledged to get vaccinated, and to ask their communities to do the same.

Our students are also taking up the cause. Our COVID Research & Innovation Task Force has launched a PSA Challenge for USM students, soliciting creative public service announcements urging Marylanders to get vaccinated and to comply with safe COVID practices.

The USM's people—our epidemiologists; our public health and infectious disease experts; our leadership, faculty, and students—have the credibility and compassion to make the case for vaccination, and all of us will be doing just that.

And once a vaccine is more widely available, our USM campuses will step up as vaccine distribution sites. Five of our universities have already been asked by state and local health departments to make their facilities available. And, of course, all five have enthusiastically agreed—Towson, Frostburg, UMB, College Park, UMES. We're working on a Systemwide agreement to facilitate more campus distribution sites should the state ultimately need them.

Meanwhile, UMCES will be partnering with the state for freezer access, given the ultra-cold conditions in which the Pfizer vaccine must be stored.

I mentioned earlier in my report that UMB's nursing school allowed their students early exit in order to join the workforce, but UMB wasn't the only university to do so. At Towson, 51 nursing students—fully two-thirds of the winter graduating class—opted to leave early and join their colleagues in battling COVID.

But our current students, too, are in this fight. We're working on paths to engage our nursing and pharmacy students in the state's mass vaccination program. We hope to open up these paths to other health professions students in the future.

These paths include direct employment of our students by health care institutions, volunteer opportunities—and, notably, options to offer for-credit clinical rotations to students engaged in “mass vax” efforts so that they might serve while also making valuable progress toward their degree.

This local work is every bit as important as our regional partnerships and our global vision. Last month, the USM signed an agreement with Connected DMV, a regional economic development consortium coming out of the Washington Board of Trade. The business, academic, and government leaders who make up this group are focused on developing a strategic and sustaining post-COVID economic recovery plan for the Capital Region.

The USM is a lead academic partner in this effort—and I'm proud to serve on the steering committee.

For our part, we're focused on establishing a regional pandemic response, preparedness, and biodefense strategy that will address existing and emerging public health threats. This work complements our own USM pandemic preparedness and response activities designed to marshal Systemwide capabilities and assets.

We have deep expertise in, for instance, data tracking and forecasting, public health policy, vaccine development, bio-production, quantum computing, supply chain solutions. We have what the region and the nation need to help prevent what we've just been through these past 10 months, and we're leveraging that expertise every day.

And we're applying what we know close to home, too—mining decades of scholarly leadership in how to control disease spread, but also applying the on-the-ground experience we gained by resuming on-campus instruction this semester.

At our last meeting, I mentioned our lessons learned document. The COVID project managers on each campus are now synthesizing the changes they'll make next spring based on how they did this fall.

I'd be disingenuous if I didn't acknowledge that that the biggest issue come spring will be testing. We're investigating a rapid-return, self-administered test that would allow for more frequent testing and easier capture of a positive result through the infection cycle.

It would allow for routine testing of all students on campus (vs. surveillance samples), and it positions us for faster catch-and-release from quarantine, which is good for everyone.

Yesterday, we had more than 2,200 new COVID cases in Maryland. I don't believe we can look at this surge and go about business as usual.

Our universities were **never** bubbles unto themselves. The conditions in the communities surrounding our institutions have everything to do with the conditions on campus. And those community conditions are deteriorating.

And I'll say one more thing: I think we can confidently project that, with new CDC leadership under the Biden Administration—with Dr. Rochelle Walensky in charge—there will be an expectation of more robust testing at U.S. universities.

I look forward to updating you on our testing plans at our next meeting.

So, yes, we have another difficult semester in front of us. But with a vaccine in mass distribution by late spring or early summer, I'm optimistic for a fall that looks closer to what we know.

But, at the same time, we've learned so much from this experience—how to optimize remote instruction, how to adapt courses for online delivery, how to meet the needs of our students in a way that honors their differences.

We cannot let all the progress we've made in access and innovation languish should on-campus instruction once again become the norm. Instead, we should strive to integrate our strategies, platforms, and resources for both on-campus and online learning. That's how you emerge from a crisis stronger, more agile, and more resilient.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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