



Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

February 19, 2021

Thank you, Chair Gooden. My thanks as well to Katherine Thompson for that important and timely presentation on conflicts of interest.

As Chair Gooden noted, it was one year ago—at the February 2020 board meeting—that I first spoke to you all as USM chancellor. And I want to begin this meeting as I began *that* one, with some words of genuine gratitude. There is no group I'd rather have alongside me in times of challenge. Your dedication, vision, and hard work have been essential to our success.

And make no mistake, we *have* been successful. Throughout this pandemic, the USM has remained open and operating. Our students are learning; our research is saving lives; our service is strengthening communities. We're delivering on our promise to remain a public good in Maryland.

GROWTH IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CAMPUS FACILITIES

Helping us keep that promise is the significant growth we've seen on our campuses—growth in our physical infrastructure and in our academic programs.

Towson University's (TU) new Science Complex—now the largest academic building on TU's campus—opened earlier this month. With 50 teaching laboratories, 30 research laboratories, 50 classrooms, eight lecture halls, 10 collaborative student spaces, an outdoor classroom leading to the Glen Arboretum, a rooftop greenhouse complex, a new planetarium, and an observatory ... it is a *transformational* facility that will support TU's nationally recognized STEM programming.

At Bowie State University, LAIKA—the Oscar-nominated and Golden Globe-winning animation studio—is building the nation's *first* stop-motion animation studio at an HBCU. The company says it considers the program a means to growing diversity in the animation industry's career pipeline. Bowie has also launched a data analytics concentration for business administration students; the discipline is essential for driving data-informed decision-making in every field.

At the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), students in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences now have a new campus home for planning their futures, with the opening of the Joel and Kim Feller Center for Advising and Career Planning.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) is adding Digital Media Studies to its undergraduate majors beginning this fall. Additionally, technology giant Apple has enlisted UMES as a Community Center for Coding and Creativity, meaning the institution will expand its curriculum to provide instruction in programming languages for Apple's X-code platform.

Just this week, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) launched its first professional certificate program in Environmental Management for Sustainability, which is hosted on the edX platform.

Two new degree programs at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) will launch this fall: From Salisbury University, a BFA in Graphic Design, which features a concentration in digital design; and from UMCP's A. James Clark School of Engineering, a BS in Biocomputational Engineering, which trains students in the fundamentals of engineering and life sciences with a focus on computational methods and data science.

And Coppin State University will launch two new science-based master's programs this fall: an MS in Applied Molecular Biology and Biochemistry and an MS in Polymer and Materials Science.

PARTNERSHIPS, PHILANTHROPY, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

USM institutions were also tremendously successful in forging new partnerships, attracting external funding and philanthropy, and strengthening the USM's economic impact.

The University of Maryland School of Nursing at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) has received a commitment of nearly \$14 million from Bill and Joanne Conway. This gift—the School of Nursing's largest financial gift to date—will create an additional 345 Conway Scholarships (for a total of 830 scholarships) across all degree programs. The scholarships cover in-state tuition, fees, and (at the undergraduate level) books. The gift also includes \$1 million to support renovation of the nursing building at USG.

At UMES, the School of Agriculture and Natural Sciences has received \$2.25 million in scholarship funding from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The award is designed to address the national shortfall in trained graduates filling positions in food, agriculture, and renewable natural resources.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded \$1 million to Towson University to continue its expansion of STEM access. The funding will support 14 four-year scholarships for graduating seniors from Baltimore-area high schools and 18 two-year scholarships for students transferring from Harford and Howard community colleges. It will also expand undergraduate research opportunities for sophomore and junior math majors.

A \$1.5 million gift from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to the UMCP School of Public Health will support efforts to prepare a new generation of public health leaders to confront emerging challenges, including pandemics, systemic racism, and the climate crisis.

And as part of an innovative program to support HBCUs across the country, Diageo North America has donated \$250,000 to establish a permanent endowed scholarship fund at Bowie State. The fund will support talented students, develop future leaders, and help shape a more equitable society.

EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Excellence and leadership, which have come to define USM institutions and their people, can also be found in abundance.

Two UMCES scientists have been named 2021–22 Fulbright Scholars. Associate Professor Lora Harris will use her award to work in Finland on questions of estuarine ecology. Meanwhile, PhD candidate Christina Goethel will use her award to support postdoctoral research and teaching in Iceland. As UMCES President Peter Goodwin noted, having *two* Fulbright Scholars this year is a testament to the impact of the center’s work.

The Fulbright honors don’t stop with UMCES. UMCP was named a Top Producer of Fulbright scholars, with six awards. And the USM has three Top Producers of Fulbright *students*: UMCP, with 16 awards; UMBC, with 11; and Salisbury, with six. I know many students were unable to travel due to the pandemic, but the Fulbright is, of course, one of academia’s preeminent honors, and I congratulate all the recipients.

In another impressive recognition, Dr. Kathleen Neuzil, director of the Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health at UMB’s School of Medicine, was named co-Marylander of the Year for 2020 by *The Baltimore Sun*. As you know, the center led the clinical trials for both FDA-approved COVID vaccines, and Dr. Neuzil co-led the NIH network tasked with confirming safety and efficacy of vaccines developed under the country’s Operation Warp Speed initiative.

Speaking of *The Baltimore Sun*, as part of its celebration of Black History Month, the *Sun* reached out to some of the region’s leading thinkers to discuss Baltimore’s future. As you’d imagine, University of Baltimore (UB) President (and former Baltimore mayor) Kurt Schmoke was among those asked to share their views. And, as you’d *also* imagine, he made a compelling case for thoughtful optimism. Also at UB, three students from the College of Public Affairs have been selected for the 2021 Maryland Legislative Fellows Program, which immerses graduate students in the legislative process as they work alongside nonpartisan staff in the Department of Legislative Services.

The Washington Post ran a compelling profile of University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) President Gregory Fowler, talking with him about the future of UMGC and of online education

writ large. The piece also highlighted the worldwide impact of UMGC and its leadership in the online space. As if on cue, a few days later, a corporate collaboration between UMGC and Amazon Web Services was announced, one that offers students a combination of paid immersive learning and on-the-job training with Amazon. And earlier this month, UMGC established a partnership with ManTech, a leading technology contractor for the U.S. government, providing employees no-cost access to UMGC's master's degree program in data analytics.

Two USM institutions were featured in two separate items in *Forbes*. The magazine named Coppin's psychology program one of the nation's best in terms of quality and affordability. And UMB was ranked 13th overall among *Forbes'* Best Large Employers, and 3rd among the nation's colleges and universities.

All three of the USM's regional higher education centers—USG, the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland, and the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown—were featured in a *Maryland Matters* opinion piece jointly authored by the three executive directors. The op-ed outlined the pivotal role regional centers will play in higher education's "new normal."

Switching from print to video coverage, a local NBC news story on surging enrollment at HBCUs—vis-à-vis an enrollment decline at traditionally White universities—featured Bowie State, noting that the school, Maryland's first HBCU, has its second-highest enrollment in history.

At Frostburg State University (FSU), engineering student Briá Johnson participated in the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) prestigious Mickey Leland Energy Fellowship program, where her research on corrosion- and heat-resistant nickel-base alloy was supervised by top scientists at the DOE. Also at FSU, Bachelor of Fine Arts student Will Baxter won an international design contest, beating out several hundred submissions from around the globe, and received an exclusive two-year deal with the Illustration Room, an Australia-based design company.

UMBC's newest undergraduate degree, a BS in Translational Life Science Technology, received the inaugural BioBuzz Workforce Champion of the Year award for its contributions to enhancing the regional biotech workforce.

Salisbury University has been named an AmeriCorps School of National Service and will provide in-state tuition, deferred admission, and recognition of AmeriCorps status in the admissions process for all AmeriCorps members and alumni.

And, in a remarkably consistent show of excellence and leadership, the USM can boast its *third consecutive U.S. surgeon general*. President Biden has tapped Towson University alumna Susan Orsega as acting surgeon general. She succeeds UMBC's Jerome Adams, who, in turn, succeeded acting Surgeon General Sylvia Trent-Adams, an alumna of both UMBC and UMB.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Finally, USM institutions distinguished themselves through outreach and community service.

Dr. Charlotte Wood, Helene Fuld School of Nursing professor at Coppin, has been appointed to Maryland's COVID Vaccine Technical Advisory Group.

UMB has partnered with the University of Maryland Medical System to establish a vaccination clinic in the university's Campus Center, where students from UMB's schools of pharmacy and nursing have joined hospital employees in administering doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

UMCP is honoring campus trailblazers and communities that have been historically overlooked. The new Johnson-Whittle Hall will honor Elaine Johnson Coates, the first African American woman to graduate from UMCP with an undergraduate degree, and Hiram Whittle, the first African American man to be admitted to the university. Pyon-Chen Hall will pay tribute to Pyon Su, the first Korean student to receive a degree from any American university, and Chunjen Constant Chen, the first Chinese student to enroll at what is now UMCP.

UMCP is also joining with the Jordan McNair Foundation to honor the life and legacy of Mr. McNair through a series of initiatives focused on student-athlete health and safety.

FSU is proposing to transform Frostburg's City Hall into a Science Education Center designed to serve school-age children from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia; provide a resource for regional science teachers; and serve as a learning and teaching site for FSU College of Education students.

And I commend UMBC, named the state's *top contributor* to the 2020 Maryland Charity Campaign. UMBC faculty and staff gave nearly \$250,000 to the campaign that supports nonprofits across the state—the highest amount among all state agencies and among all USM institutions.

USM INITIATIVES

Before turning to our FY22 budget outlook, let me quickly update you on a couple of systemwide initiatives.

The USM's Maryland Momentum Fund has added another investment: \$500,000 in educational technology company Voxy EnGen, a language learning platform that helps immigrants and refugees acquire the language skills they need for workplace success and civic engagement.

Fulfilling its mission to support ventures launched by the USM's faculty, staff, students, alumni, and affiliated research park tenants, the Momentum Fund is now invested in 19 companies. And our \$6.9 million total investment is matched 6:1 with \$43 million from co-investors.

Turning to the USM's vision for the future, I'm pleased to share that our strategic planning process is now fully underway. The board's Strategic Planning Work Group—chaired by Regent Gonella and working closely with Huron Consulting—will gather input from the USM community and an expansive set of external stakeholders in the development of what will be an inclusive and forward-leaning plan. I'll keep you updated as the work progresses.

And, finally, I've gotten through a good bit of my remarks without once mentioning COVID testing, monitoring, isolation, or quarantine. I'd simply like to say that our spring semester is going well so far. Our rigorous disease prevention and containment protocols have resulted in very low positivity rates systemwide. As of the start of this week, all campuses are under 1 percent positivity, which is well below their county averages. I thank everyone for their vigilance, their compliance, and their hard, hard work.

USM BUDGET OUTLOOK

Earlier this month, I testified before the General Assembly on Gov. Hogan's proposed FY22 budget for the USM. As you know, the past 12 months have featured a steady stream of bad news on the budget front. At the end of FY20, between revenue lost from cancellations and housing and fee refunds, and costs associated with new safety protocols and online learning, the USM took a budget hit of \$173 million. And that was just the beginning. In FY21, our revenue losses deepened and our costs climbed, leaving us with a \$542 million budget hole. That's a two-year shortfall of \$715 million.

As you also know, we've taken aggressive steps to address this shortfall. We implemented a near-freeze on new hires, eliminated more than 500 vacant positions (full- and part-time), cut discretionary spending, enacted temporary salary reductions, and deferred construction and facilities maintenance. In addition, we drew down our fund balance by \$184 million.

But, of course, many of these are one-time—unsustainable—actions. And given this bleak budget picture, any significant cuts in the governor's FY22 proposal would have moved us from a difficult position to a devastating one.

And so I'm relieved—even happy—that the governor's proposal of \$1.4 billion in state support next year is only a 0.5 percent decrease from our FY21 *adjusted* budget. And even with this reduction, we'll be able to limit our tuition increase next year to 2 percent for in-state undergraduates. I've had some really good discussions with members of the General Assembly this session, and I hope that budget number will hold.

The bottom line is that this budget proposal demonstrates—at a time of enormous fiscal pain—Maryland's abiding commitment to higher education. My leadership team and I are working with each of the institutions to generate support for this budget. And, of course, I ask all of you to voice your *own* support as you talk with policymakers, colleagues, and associates.

THE POWER OF SYSTEMNESS

Let me close with one final observation. My testimony earlier this month before the House and Senate subcommittees was actually my second time this session formally addressing members of the General Assembly.

The day before, on the floor of the Maryland Senate, the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership—the *MPower* initiative between UMB and UMCP—was recognized for reaching a significant milestone. The NSF has officially linked UMB and UMCP as one research enterprise. And with \$1.1 billion in R&D expenditures, that single enterprise—the University of Maryland—now ranks 8th among the nation’s public research universities and 14th overall. Maryland now joins a handful of elite states with more than one university conducting at least \$1 billion in R&D every year. (The second university is, of course, the nation’s No. 1 research institution, Johns Hopkins University.)

This is a remarkable accomplishment—won by the talent and energy of our faculty, and the power of their ideas; won by the leadership of Presidents Bruce Jarrell and Darryll Pines, former President Wallace Loh, and Vice President for Research Laurie Locascio; won by the vision of the late Senate President Emeritus Mike Miller, his successor, Senate President Bill Ferguson, and their legislative colleagues.

But it was won, too, by our commitment to systemness. The very idea behind systemness is that by leveraging the strength of our USM institutions, we can create impact greater than the sum of our parts. And that’s what we’re doing with *MPower*, with our regional higher education centers, with the COVID Research and Innovation Task Force, and with a host of exciting cross-institutional initiatives.

But we can do more of this. We can join our assets and expertise in a way that benefits our students, our citizens, and our communities; in a way that strengthens our institutions, our system, and our state; in a way that enlarges what we can accomplish, individually and together. I look forward to exploring with the presidents the opportunities we have before us.

I’ll end by acknowledging that the concept of systemness was behind a COVID vaccine campaign I undertook with our 12 USM presidents. Together, we pledged to get vaccinated when we’re eligible. It’s a sign of our trust in the vaccine *science*—and the vaccine *scientists*. It’s a sign of our commitment to protect public health. We put this pledge on video, and I’d like to show it to you now.

Madam Chair, this concludes my report. I’m happy to respond to questions.

###