



Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

April 16, 2021

Thank you, Chair Gooden. As has become my custom over this past year, I begin by echoing your words of thanks to those across the USM who have distinguished themselves through their leadership and hard work. I especially commend our Regents Faculty Award winners, and I look forward to honoring them in person when circumstances allow.

Let me also thank everyone who participated in our forum on Student Activism and Building Trust. You know, in my younger days, college campuses were among the most politically and socially active places in the country. Then for a long time, it seemed they were best described as “hotbeds of rest.” I’m glad to see our students rekindling a spirit of activism.

A BUSY AND SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATIVE SESSION

There are a number of issues I want to touch on this morning, and I’ll begin with the legislative session that just ended.

At our February meeting, I expressed relief at the governor’s USM operating budget proposal of \$1.4 billion. That proposal has since been passed by the General Assembly, and we have further good news: The governor’s supplemental budget will provide an additional \$23.5 million for the USM, targeted to university-based public health and health professions programs. The University System is, by far, Maryland’s largest producer of health professionals. But as the pandemic has made clear, even with the USM’s leadership, Maryland suffers from a shortage of health care workers.

The support provided by the governor’s supplemental budget will help us expand our health care workforce statewide by supporting additional faculty and staff in programs that educate nurses, pharmacists, physicians, physician assistants, public health professionals, and others. I thank the governor for this support and for recognizing the USM’s pivotal role in securing Marylanders’ health and safety.

Additionally, the General Assembly allocated funds for facilities renewal and construction projects across the USM. Critical projects funded or advanced through our capital budget include the MLK Communication Arts and Humanities Building at Bowie State University (BSU), the Health Professions Building at Towson University (TU), the School of Pharmacy and Health

Professions at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), and the Education Professions and Health Sciences Center at Frostburg State University (FSU). Our leaders in Annapolis were very generous with us in terms of our campus infrastructure, knowing that our facilities enable our teaching, research, and service missions. We're deeply grateful.

I also want to acknowledge the historic agreement reached earlier this month when the governor signed HB1/SB1, giving Maryland's HBCUs \$577 million over 10 years to achieve funding equity with the state's traditionally white institutions. The bill settles a longstanding lawsuit and positions our HBCUs for even greater growth and prominence. I know our colleagues at Coppin State University (CSU), Bowie State, and UMES are thrilled—as am I.

This was an incredibly busy legislative session for the USM Office and for our universities, with a number of bills requiring input and testimony. I thank our government relations team, led by Vice Chancellor Patrick Hogan, and colleagues across the System who worked around the clock to help shape a legislative agenda that benefits our students, our employees, and Maryland as a whole. I'm proud of the work we've done together.

ON-CAMPUS VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

Before highlighting news from our universities, I want to address a few COVID-related issues. As you know—even as more of us get vaccinated—we're seeing an uptick in COVID cases. It's a reminder that we're not out of the woods: This pandemic is still dangerous and still deadly, and we'll need to work hard to stay ahead of this ever-evolving virus.

That said, we do have some very good news. We've seen the flow of vaccines accelerate across the state, with more mass vaccination sites, more pharmacy providers, and now an effort to ramp up mobile distribution sites. Clearly, we need every dose we can get, given that Gov. Hogan has opened up vaccine eligibility to all adult Marylanders.

The resolution of vaccine bottlenecks has benefited our campuses as well. We're partnering with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Higher Education Commission to allow our universities to register as vaccine providers. This means that university health centers are able to vaccinate the students currently on campus for the spring semester, along with faculty and staff. And if a university doesn't have adequate personnel or capability to administer the doses, it can partner with another distributor—a nearby pharmacy, the local health department—to provide on-campus vaccination.

Securing this authority to distribute vaccines was a fast-moving effort, given that we needed to make sure students could get both doses of the vaccine before heading home for the summer. And this isn't an insignificant number of students we're talking about. Right now, we have about 15,000 students on campus—either in residence halls or public-private housing arrangements. Several thousand of these students have already been vaccinated.

I know many of them are grateful for the chance to get a vaccine from someone they know and trust, in a setting that's familiar to them. At the same time, I know that—this week especially—there's some anxiety around vaccination. Maryland has paused use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, following the announcement that the FDA and the CDC would examine six incidents nationwide of post-vaccination blood clots.

This pause has had little impact on most of our universities, given that most are using the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. Of course, I know all of us are following the J+J development very closely and are hoping for more data soon from the investigating agencies.

I well understand that this pause could have a chilling effect on mandating vaccines for university students across the U.S. I'll have more to say about mandatory vaccination later in this meeting.

GETTING BACK TO "NORMAL"

I will say this right now, though: Widespread vaccination is how we'll have a fall semester that resembles our pre-pandemic "normal." Widespread vaccination is the way to bring back more students for on-campus instruction and activities. Widespread vaccination is the way to rekindle that vibrant energy—that sense of connection and community—that I know our students are missing.

The University System wants to get back to normal. Our universities want to get back to normal. Most of all, our students want a normal college experience. Vaccination is a central piece of that. But, at the same time, it's not our entire strategy. We'll be following public health guidelines on masks and other prevention protocols. We'll continue symptom monitoring and, yes, testing—though I imagine not with the frequency of this spring. We'll follow guidance on isolation and quarantine.

And we'll continue to rely on our own in-house experts—together with advice from our health department colleagues—to shape and refine our fall strategy. More than a year into this crisis, we have an infrastructure in place at the System and university levels that allows fast dissemination of best practices; that allows rapid and collaborative decision-making; that allows consistency, but still respects the uniqueness of each of our institutions.

RETURN TO CAMPUS: FALL 2021

And so I've stood up a COVID Guidance Workgroup similar to the one we convened last year; this is version 2.0. It's coordinated by senior vice chancellor Jo Boughman, and Jo's special advisor, our resident epidemiology and public health expert Dr. Kate Tracy. Just like last year, System and university reps are coming together to develop guidance that, collectively, we can point to as individual campus plans take shape.

The group's focus is health and safety, so they're weighing in on vaccination, testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine, and continued public health interventions. They're sharing guidance on how to get our campus facilities ready for fall; what infrastructure and policies we'll need should we have to pivot once again to remote learning; what will be permitted when it comes to, for example, employee business travel and study-abroad opportunities; what the impact will be on our international students. I thank the group for its ongoing work, and I look forward to updating the board on our fall plans.

Turning now to our campuses, there's been no shortage of good news.

USM INSTITUTIONS RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY AND IMPACT

I'll start with *U.S. News and World Report's* Best Graduate School rankings. The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) was recognized with 25 Top 20 programs, including seven in the Top 5. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), every school either received an overall ranking in the Top 20, or had individual Top 20 programs, including five Top 10 rankings. My congratulations to both universities on their continued national leadership.

But it wasn't just our largest research institutions that were recognized. Among the ranked graduate programs were education at Bowie State, Frostburg, Towson, and Salisbury University (SU); rehabilitation counseling at Coppin State and UMES; and public affairs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and the University of Baltimore (UB).

In fact, literally *every eligible USM institution* was recognized among the *U.S. News* rankings.

There are other impressive rankings I want to note as well.

VIQTORY, which serves military personnel and their spouses transitioning into civilian life, has given four USM institutions the 2021–22 Military Friendly Schools rating: UMES, Salisbury, Bowie State, and—for the 10th consecutive year—Frostburg.

Higher education resource guide Intelligent.com has awarded Coppin top 40 national rankings for two degree programs: its master's in adult and continuing education and its business management program.

Five USM institutions—UMES, Frostburg, UB, Towson, and UMBC—are among 200 colleges nationwide to be designated a Voter-Friendly Campus by the Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA. At a time when civic education is so vitally important, this commitment to democratic engagement is critical.

And at our last meeting, I mentioned the NSF's latest Higher Education Research and Development survey, in which UMCP and UMB are linked as one research enterprise. In that survey, this combined "University of Maryland" ranks 8th among the nation's public research

universities and 14th overall. Well, that same survey placed UMBC among the country's top 100 public institutions in federal research support.

GROWTH IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CAMPUS FACILITIES

To ensure our leadership and impact going forward, USM institutions are committed to growing their academic programs and enhancing the facilities that nurture education and discovery.

Salisbury and UMES have renewed an academic partnership allowing students to earn two degrees in only 4½ years. The dual-degree program in physics and engineering will streamline instruction, allowing students to attend SU for three years as physics majors, then transfer to UMES for the remaining 1½ years as engineering majors.

The CSU College of Business recently introduced the Center for Strategic Entrepreneurship, designed to nourish an entrepreneurial ecosystem in West Baltimore.

In response to the urgent demand for high-quality remote and hybrid instruction, Towson has launched a new post-baccalaureate certificate in online learning and teaching.

Frostburg has become a founding member of the MSM Higher Ed Pathways program, which will prepare students for international education opportunities at several universities, creating a range of study-abroad pathways.

Advancing its 70-year mission to provide education to U.S. military personnel serving overseas, the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) has opened a new permanent office at Spain's Morón Air Force Base, which often serves as a jumping-off point for deployment to Africa. It becomes the university's 51st permanent location in Europe, and the second in Spain.

At the USM at Southern Maryland (USMSM), progress continues on the \$86 million Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) Building. Slated to open this fall, the building will be transformative for the USMSM's students, for the center's groundbreaking research in unmanned autonomous systems, and for the economic growth of the entire region.

Towson's new five-story, \$160 million Science Complex opened for the spring semester. The structure is now the largest academic building on Towson's campus, featuring 50 teaching labs, 30 research labs, 50 classrooms, eight lecture halls, and 10 collaborative student spaces.

After a national search, UMB named its first-ever chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer and vice president. Dr. Diane Forbes Berthoud assumes the position on July 1. It's bittersweet that UMB also made news with a forthcoming departure. Dr. E. Albert Reece announced that he'll be stepping down as dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine at the end of next year. Dean Reece will be remembered as a leader instrumental in the school's rise as an academic and research powerhouse.

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.

Eastern Shore-based biotech company IES Life Sciences, in partnership with UMES, is seeking emergency FDA approval for a test that predicts severity of COVID-19 symptoms, so that sufficient resources can be focused on the patients who need them most.

UMB's School of Nursing recently launched dual-admission agreements with Hagerstown Community College and Allegany College of Maryland. With these agreements, the School of Nursing now has a formal partnership with *every community college in Maryland* that offers an associate degree in nursing, enabling a smooth transition to the school's BSN degree.

At UMBC, James Foulds, assistant professor of information systems, received an NSF CAREER Award of nearly \$550,000 over five years to support his research on improving the fairness and robustness of artificial intelligence algorithms.

An incredible \$9 million gift from the Brin Family Foundation will support UMCP's campus-wide efforts to reimagine performing arts education. The gift will fund research initiatives as well as new teaching positions, undergraduate scholarships, classroom and studio renovations, and instructional technology for College Park's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies.

At UMB, the Francis King Carey School of Law received a \$5 million gift from biotech entrepreneurs Marco and Debbie Chacón to establish the Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice. The center provides direct representation and impact litigation on issues of asylum and the intersection of criminal and immigration law, while providing training for future lawyers.

UB received a record \$5 million gift from real estate developer Samuel G. Rose to create a new scholarship fund for students having trouble affording tuition.

Salisbury's 2021 Giving Day was a true success: In one 24-hour period, almost 1,800 supporters gave more than \$170,000.

Dynamhex, a startup energy data company formed by Sanwar Sunny, assistant professor of entrepreneurship at UB's Merrick School of Business, became the Maryland Momentum Fund's 20th investment. Dynamhex provides complex energy consumption and carbon footprint data for corporate, utility, and government entities. The company received a \$250,000 investment from the Momentum Fund as part of a \$1.5 million seed round.

UMCP has received \$3 million from JPMorgan Chase to create the Small Business Anti-Displacement Network, which will create tools and push policies to prevent the displacement or

closure of vulnerable businesses—especially minority-owned businesses, which have been particularly hard-hit during COVID.

Also at UMCP, in an incredibly significant move, IonQ—a revolutionary quantum computing company headquartered in College Park’s Discovery District—became the *first-ever* quantum company to go public, doing so with a \$2 billion valuation.

EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Earlier, we acknowledged the Regents Faculty Award winners. Joining these honorees are faculty, staff, and students throughout the USM who have likewise been recognized for excellence.

At UB, Assistant Professor Sarah Federman and Assistant Professor Al Gourrier, both from the School of Public and International Affairs, have been accepted to the Fulbright Specialist Program Roster for a tenure of four years. They will serve as researchers and consultants on curriculum, faculty development, and institutional planning at overseas academic institutions.

The UMBC Cyber Dawgs took first place in the 2021 Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition finals. The students will compete at the National Collegiate Competition later this month.

In another cyber event—the 2021 CyberMaryland Conference’s national capture-the-flag competition—UMGC placed first in the four-year university category, and Towson took third.

Last month, TU President Kim Schatzel was named to the *Maryland Daily Record's* Top 100 Women in Maryland for a third time, making her one of 12 women joining the Circle of Excellence this year, the publication’s highest honor. Joining President Schatzel in the paper’s Top 100 Women list are three faculty members at UMB’s School of Medicine: Tracy Bale, Kimberly Lumpkins, and Jill RachBeisel; Christy Weer, dean of Salisbury’s Perdue School of Business; and Coppin professor Charlotte Wood.

The *Daily Record* also came out with its inaugural Power 100 list, naming the people who have an outsized role in shaping the state’s business and civic institutions. The System was well-represented, with four USM presidents on the list: Freeman Hrabowski, Bruce Jarrell, Darryll Pines, and—once again—Kim Schatzel.

Three UMCP undergraduates—Sanketh Andhavarapu, Naveen Raman, and Ela Rockafellow—were named Goldwater Scholars. The Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation encourages students to pursue advanced study and research careers in the sciences, engineering, and math. In addition, College Park’s Pavan Ravindra—named a Goldwater Scholar last year—is one of only 17 students nationwide awarded a 2021 Winston Churchill Scholarship. He’ll pursue a one-year master’s degree at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

And, of course, next week—April 19–24—College Park will celebrate Inauguration Week, as the university officially installs Dr. Darryll Pines as president. It’s been less than a year since President Pines took the reins at College Park, and he’s enjoyed the proverbial baptism by fire.

At the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), the NSF awarded Assistant Professor Xin Zhang a CAREER Award to lead a five-year research program helping support sustainable nitrogen use and effective ecosystem management in the Chesapeake Bay and estuaries around the world. UMCES also received a \$1 million NSF award to expand its research on the ecology and ecosystem that exist at the junction of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

Bowie State was recognized with an abundance of honors: BSU’s education programs were given the Exemplary Achievement Award from the National Association for Professional Development Schools; Bowie State Professor Talisha Dunn-Square was named one of four finalists for U.S. HBCU Educator of the Year; BSU Professor Cynthia Taylor was named Counselor Educator of the Year by the Maryland School Counselor Association; and Bowie State’s ROTC program won the U.S. Army Cadet Command’s 2019–20 MacArthur Award, which recognizes the program as one of the best in the nation.

The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) has positioned itself as a leader in the shift to virtual engagement: Student Ambassadors at USG have developed a virtual tour for prospective students; USG launched a virtual Industry Roundtable featuring Rep. David Trone; and USG Executive Director Anne Khademian has hosted 20 episodes of her weekly video podcast, “This is USG.”

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

USM institutions also continue to provide vital outreach to the communities they serve.

UMB has opened a vaccination clinic on campus, with UMB faculty, staff, and student volunteers serving their Baltimore City neighbors.

Coppin, in partnership with the University of Maryland Medical System, has established a campus COVID-19 call center to help people in communities of color schedule vaccination appointments.

The TU Tutors initiative out of Towson’s College of Education is providing free online tutoring to more than 500 Maryland preK–12 students.

Next Saturday, April 24, FSU will host its annual Beautify the ’Burg event. Frostburg students and neighbors will volunteer together, completing revitalization projects to prepare Frostburg for its tourism season.

The USM at Hagerstown (USMH) held a virtual open house last month. USMH program representatives were on hand to answer questions about the degrees offered, while USMH administrators discussed plans for a safe return to campus in the fall.

UMBC has launched a Biotech Boot Camp at USG to train workers displaced by COVID-19 for in-demand jobs. In the pilot effort, 11 Montgomery County residents completed four weeks of intensive, hands-on training in basic biotech techniques, and are now qualified for entry-level positions in the biotech industry.

The main gateway to UMCP—where the city and the university meet—is set for transformational change. A \$300 million development plan accommodating research, offices, retail, and housing has just been unveiled. The mixed-use project will enhance the campus, strengthen the ecosystem for innovation and technology, and foster closer connections between the university and its neighbors.

An accounting of the University System’s civic engagement wouldn’t be complete without a mention of our board chair, Linda Gooden, who was named to the *Baltimore Sun’s* Business and Civic Hall of Fame. Chair Gooden’s service on this board is but one of her innumerable contributions to Maryland, and we are better for her dedication.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to highlight a truly Systemwide achievement. The Maryland Charity Campaign was especially challenging this year, with so many generous people in need themselves. But the campaign proved that the heart of the USM is bigger than anyone can measure.

The USM Office, the USM Foundation, and seven of our 12 institutions exceeded their giving goals. UB, Salisbury, and the USM Office received special awards for their participation rate, improvement in participation and giving, and dollars raised. UMBC was singled out for recognition as the top contributor in the entire campaign, with nearly \$250,000 pledged. I continue to be impressed—awed—by the wide ribbon of generosity that runs through the fabric of the USM. It’s inspiring.

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

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