



Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay Perman

December 10, 2021

Thank you, Chair Gooden. And I add my thanks to Ellen Herbst and Lindsay Ryan for their report on the USM's economic impact. You know, we talk a lot about our core missions—education, research, service—but I don't think we talk enough about how these missions translate into billions of dollars returned every year to the state and its people. We're *central* to Maryland's strength and prosperity, and that's especially compelling right now.

I thank our hosts this morning, Bowie State University (BSU) and President Aminta Breaux. Dr. Breaux is right: These are exciting times at BSU. Since our last board meeting less than a month ago, Bowie has joined a consortium dedicated to strengthening the STEM pipeline for county high school and community college students. Bowie was one of three HBCUs selected for the first cohort of Penn National's new STEM Scholarship Program, ultimately providing more than \$4 million to BSU and other Historically Black Institutions. And a team of Bowie students took home 3rd place in the Microsoft Bot-a-Thon Challenge for their design of an academic advising chatbot.

Of course, I must mention that BSU Football made history, for the first time ever reaching the quarterfinals of the NCAA Division II Playoffs. Fittingly, Coach Damon Wilson was just named D-II Region 2 coach of the year. Congratulations!

As Chair Gooden noted, Bowie last night launched its \$50 million campaign, BSU Bold. It was great to take part in the kickoff, and I wish you quick progress toward your goal. I congratulate President Breaux and the entire university on BSU's future, which is bright indeed.

While it's been only a matter of weeks since we last met, there's been no shortage of good news across the System.

INCLUSIVE CAMPUSES | ENGAGED CITIZENS

At our meeting last month, I led off with a few words about our universities' prominence in the latest round of national rankings. Today, I want to highlight a few *different* rankings and awards—accolades that don't focus solely on academic achievement, but on how well our universities educate engaged citizens and cultivate inclusive campuses. Certainly, that's a foundational mission for us.

At an awards ceremony last month, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge honored individuals and institutions whose work drove historic voter turnout during the 2020 presidential election. Well over half of our universities were recognized at that event.

- Gold Seals went to institutions with a voter participation rate between 70 and 80 percent: the University of Baltimore (UBalt), Towson University (TU), the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP).
- Silver Seals went to institutions with a voter participation rate of 60 to 70 percent: Frostburg State University (FSU), Salisbury University (SU), and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).
- Among universities nationwide, Towson was recognized with a Champion Campus Award for the Best Democratic Engagement Action Plan.
- And College Park's Alexandra Marquez was honored as Standout Undergraduate Student.

Another national ranking recently shone a spotlight on our universities. Two USM institutions received five stars—the highest possible rating—from Campus Pride, whose work creates safer, more welcoming college campuses for LGBTQ students. Towson and College Park were among just 47 colleges and universities nationwide to earn the recognition.

APLU honored UMBC with its 2021 Gold Award in Leadership and Pervasiveness for Internationalization. UMBC is the only North American university to receive the Gold Award, affirming its intentional work in creating a culture of global engagement. And, of course, in last month's edition of *Diverse* magazine, President Freeman Hrabowski was celebrated as the 2021 recipient of the John Hope Franklin Award, joining luminaries like the late Maya Angelou and Rep. John Lewis.

The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) was ranked #1 among universities in the *Military Times'* latest survey of the best employers for veterans. It's the most comprehensive annual ranking of military-connected employment, benefits, and support efforts.

Next week, the USM's own Nancy Shapiro, associate vice chancellor for education and outreach, will receive the Civic Leadership Award from Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic, a much-deserved acknowledgement of Dr. Shapiro's shaping of a national civic education and community engagement agenda.

It's gratifying that the USM is so active in the organization, as it demonstrates our commitment to these twin goals. Frostburg President Ron Nowaczyk is chair of Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic, and Heidi Anderson, president of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), is secretary. Most of our presidents serve on Campus Compact's President's Council, and almost every university is a member.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The fact is, a commitment to community engagement—to community *connection*—is deeply felt throughout the USM.

Last week, Coppin State University (CSU) President Anthony Jenkins hosted the inaugural meeting of the West North Avenue Development Authority. It's a collaboration of residents, business owners, and the university, with Coppin playing an integral role in actualizing long-overdue investment and development in the West North Avenue corridor.

The Horn Point Laboratory at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) received a Community in Conservation grant from Waterfowl Chesapeake, a nonprofit dedicated to the celebration of life on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The grant will advance UMCES's three-pronged goal of promoting science, education, and restoration in the community.

Last month, UMES hosted the second annual Man The Shore Summit, focused on bringing diversity to preK–12 education. With Black and Brown men making up just 4 percent of all U.S. teachers, it's critical we undertake efforts like this to diversify the corps of teachers educating and nurturing our children.

Just last week, the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown (USMH) held its annual Feast at Yuletide, bringing together members of the community for this annual event, and raising more than \$53,000 in scholarship support for USMH students. Congratulations!

And, in a wonderful surprise, Salisbury Mayor Jake Day announced the renaming of Camden Street in Downtown Salisbury. The new "Chuck Wight Street" is a recognition of the university's commitment to Downtown Salisbury under Dr. Wight's leadership, his dedication to connecting the campus and the community. I know that that commitment will abide long after Dr. Wight leaves the presidency. It's a worthy legacy.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Over the past four weeks, we've advanced the missions that sustain us: education, discovery, economic impact.

Ting Zhang, associate professor of economics at UBalt's Merrick School of Business—and associate director of the university's Jacob France Institute—has been awarded a fellowship from the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management, where she'll explore the relationship between public policy and entrepreneurship.

Salisbury is launching an initiative making it easier for freshmen who qualify for federal Pell Grants to attend the university. The new program—Sea Gull Pell Promise—will cover any tuition costs remaining once the student's scholarships, grants, and benefits are applied. Also at SU,

thanks to an MHEC grant of close to \$1 million, the School of Nursing will increase its enrollment and offer an accelerated option, bringing more nurses into the Maryland workforce sooner.

That same commitment to shoring up the nursing workforce animates efforts at UMB. The School of Nursing once again graduated its students early—this year, all 161 students—so that our hospitals and clinics can keep caring for patients amid a nationwide nursing shortage that’s the worst in 40-plus years.

Also at UMB, researchers at the Institute of Human Virology won \$6.5 million from the NIH to streamline big data collection in Nigeria and South Africa, an effort central to addressing public health needs as the countries grapple with *two* pandemics: COVID and HIV/AIDS. Researchers at UMB’s School of Medicine have won \$2 million from the NIH to study the causes of glaucoma. And, separately, School of Medicine researchers have found a new gene variant in Amish populations that’s linked to a lower risk of heart disease. This discovery could jumpstart the development of therapeutics mimicking the variant.

Last month, eight professors—four from UMB and four from UMCP—were chosen as the inaugural MPower Professors. This honor, named for the alliance between the two schools, recognizes, incentivizes, and fosters collaboration between faculty in Baltimore and College Park.

College Park also announced significant funding news—\$32.5 million from NASA to extend a cooperative agreement through which the university oversees the space agency’s data on asteroids, comets, meteorites, and other small objects in space. It’s an area of study in which the school has made major contributions. And just last week, College Park and the Department of Defense opened the Applied Research Lab in Intelligence and Security to protect against national security threats and to shape the country’s intelligence workforce.

Also, I have to mention that in *Newsweek’s* first-ever ranking of America’s best online universities, College Park clinched a #4 ranking and UMGC, #21. And UMGC continues to expand its reach—continues to amplify its impact—establishing a partnership with the Community College of Philadelphia that will open up UMGC’s online programs to more than 22,000 students.

Shortly after several of us gathered at the USM at Southern Maryland (USMSM) to celebrate the opening of the SMART Building, a WTOP reporter paid a visit, filing an expansive story on the center’s people, its mission, and the facility’s promised impact in education, research, and economic growth.

The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) held its annual First Generation Celebration, recognizing the achievements of the center’s first-gen students. The celebration featured a very special guest, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, who talked about the extraordinary success of USG’s ACES

program, which provides students a seamless transition from high school, to community college, to USG.

And there's one final news item I want to mention: The Mellon Foundation has given UMBC, College Park, and Morgan State University \$3 million to develop a higher education leadership pipeline for scholars in the arts and humanities, with particular emphasis on female faculty and Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous faculty. You all *know* how proud I am of the USM's leadership diversity. But the fact that two of our institutions are leading a grant to help American higher education enrich diversity at the very top levels—diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, and discipline—makes me prouder still. Because, collectively, we have so much more work to do.

USM 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

In other business, the USM's 2022 Annual Report will soon be released. The report details our Systemwide success in areas like access and affordability, equity and inclusion, academic quality, and civic engagement. It showcases our impact on workforce development, company creation, and economic growth, and our progress in creating a culture of philanthropy, achieving sustainability, and stewarding our finances. I'll make sure everyone gets a copy.

COVID UPDATE

I thought it might come to pass that this would be my first-ever Chancellor's report in which I *don't* mention the COVID pandemic. But that's not to be. I simply want to say that we're closely monitoring the Omicron variant, which is causing concern here in the U.S. and abroad. We know that vaccination remains our best defense against infection—and infection *spread*—and so, in consultation with the presidents, I've issued a statement urging all students, faculty, and staff to get their COVID booster shots as soon as they're eligible.

The landscape of this disease is fast-changing, as always. But we benefit from our collaboration—our Systemness—and I'm fortunate to keep in close contact with the presidents and their capable teams as we examine the data and discuss COVID protocols for the winter and spring terms. Of course, we'll share any decisions about those protocols as soon as they're made.

A NEW YEAR OF STRENGTH, PEACE & JOY

This is our last board meeting before the winter break. And yesterday, you should have received my holiday video message.

I want to repeat just *part* of that message here. I want to thank everyone in this room for creating, every day, the world I want to live in. A world where questions are welcomed and curiosity is rewarded; where an open mind and a compassionate spirit are prized above all else; where all people are included, and listened to, and treated fairly; where we celebrate human creativity and solve the grand challenges of our age; where the greatest joy is learning and the

greatest pursuit is truth; where the foundational mission is to be of service to others. You make this world of ours *sing*.

And my hope for the New Year is simply that we have the grace, the will, the clarity, and the strength to keep doing this vitally important work of creating the future. I thank you all.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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