



## Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

Frostburg State University | June 16, 2023

Thank you, Madame Chair, and let me congratulate you on your award this week from the American Heart Association. Chair Gooden received the AHA's 2023 G. Morgan Stark Memorial Award. Let me tell you how big a deal this is: The award is given annually to only *one* AHA national volunteer. Chair Gooden was honored for her work to improve the association's technology and risk management platforms. Linda, thank you for modeling service. Congratulations.

I join Chair Gooden in praising our Student Scholarship winners. It was a lovely ceremony, and a terrific networking event. Arsalan, again, thank you for ensuring that our extraordinary students get some well-deserved recognition.

Let me also thank our hosts this morning, Frostburg State and President Nowaczyk. For most of us, it's a long drive to get here, but the payoff is just incredible. Thank you for having us.

I add my thanks to all of our departing regents. And to Regent Oludayo, my congratulations on your graduation from Bowie State. To Vice Chair Gary Attman—leaving the board after 14 years and three chancellors—I'm so grateful that I personally got to serve this great System with you. Your leadership will be missed.

### LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

As Chair Gooden mentioned, June serves as a year-in-review, and *this* year was marked by several leadership transitions.

In April, we were thrilled to formally install Dr. Sheares Ashby as UMBC president. And then, just one week later, we inaugurated Dr. Lepre at Salisbury University. The days were perfect—truly—and the joy and optimism of those ceremonies will stay with me for a very long time.

Towson University will soon have a new president. We're preparing for an announcement this summer. I thank the search committee and its chair, Regent Fish, for their hard work. Without doubt, this is a sought-after job. The candidates are accomplished higher ed leaders from across

the country, which speaks to Towson's prominence. I thank Dr. Perreault for sustaining TU's excellence and momentum as the search is conducted.

This spring, Dr. Jacob Ashby was named the new executive director of the USM at Hagerstown. And I was thrilled to see Dr. Ashby profiled in *The Herald-Mail* last month, sharing his vision for positioning USMH as *the* driver of social mobility in Washington County. Dr. Ashby, we're here to support you in that mission.

We're also in the midst of a transition at UMCES. I'm grateful that Dr. Goodwin will continue as president until his retirement on Sept. 25, and delighted that Dr. Bill Dennison, vice president for science application and professor of marine science, has agreed to take over as interim leader.

I've shared many times my ambitions that the USM become the country's premier institution for environmental science and policy; that we drive the national conversation on climate solutions and provide essential expertise. And so I'm honored to be invited to serve on the Aspen Institute's Higher Ed Climate Action Task Force to accelerate what U.S. universities are doing to solve our climate crisis. I look forward to updating you on our work.

## UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

Let me turn now to the excellence of our institutions, recounting *recent* good news, but also some of our universities' biggest achievements over the past 12 months.

I begin with our host today. I've talked a lot recently about Frostburg's leadership as an anchor institution in Western Maryland, convening partners in pursuit of common economic goals—regional goals—and working collaboratively with those partners on strategies that advance inclusive prosperity and social connection.

If you consider Frostburg's efforts this year, you see that this "anchor ethos" suffuses everything it does: Partnering with the Maryland Energy Administration on a clean-energy microgrid to benefit the campus and the community. Working with local two-year colleges to develop a renewable energy training certificate. Winning federal grants to diversify the teacher workforce in Western Maryland and increase the number of culturally responsive special educators. Partnering with Garrett County Public Schools in the Bobcat Academy, a dual-enrollment program allowing high school seniors to earn college credits. Ron, thank you for showing what an anchor institution can do in—and for—our rural communities.

Coppin State University knows something about serving as an anchor. Late last year, Coppin's Pathways to Professions program—designed to close the teacher shortage and boost student success in Maryland's high-need urban and rural schools—won two federal grants totaling \$8

million. Add to that \$4 million from the Department of Commerce to help close the digital divide in West Baltimore.

This spring, a \$2 million grant from Truist—the largest corporate gift in Coppin’s history—established the Truist Hub for Black Economic Mobility at the university’s Eagle Achievement Center. None of this good work was lost on Gov. Moore, who delivered his very *first* commencement address as Maryland’s leader to the Coppin State Class of 2023. Anthony, congratulations.

At UMBC, the research enterprise keeps growing. The university won two huge NSF grants: \$13 million to lead a climate-focused data science institute, and \$10 million to grow the number of postdocs of color in the STEM disciplines. With the winter came a \$1.2 million Department of Defense grant to enhance cyber training and then a five-year, \$13.7 million NIH grant—a partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore—to better recruit biomedical faculty from underrepresented groups.

Earlier this month—with initial funding of \$2 million from the DOD—UMBC launched the Center for Navigation, Timing, and Frequency Research, using photonic technology to develop clocks and communication protocols that are invulnerable to disruptions or sabotage, as GPS satellites are. Congratulations, Valerie.

Towson University is “walking the walk” of equity and inclusion. For the third year in a row, Towson was awarded a national Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award—not only for success in diversifying its student body and closing race-based achievement gaps, but for its relentless efforts to *sustain* a campuswide focus on DEI.

The university joined the American Talent Initiative to substantially expand access and opportunity for low- and moderate-income students. And two months later, Bloomberg Philanthropies recognized TU among 28 universities nationwide for its success in enrolling Pell-eligible students. And just this month, Towson was named to the First Scholars Network for its commitment to improving experiences and outcomes for first-gen college students. Well done, Melanie.

Last fall, UMES was one of six universities—and the first-ever HBCU—to win a Howard Hughes Medical Institute STEM education grant. The grant challenges research universities to create cultural change that prepares all undergraduates to excel in STEM. UMES is using the \$2.5 million grant to develop an immersive living-learning community for STEM students.

The university continues building out its signature aviation sciences program, developing an FAA-certified curriculum in aviation maintenance.

And what a special celebration it was last month as we dedicated UMES's Pharmacy and Health Sciences Complex, consolidating the university's nine health sciences programs—the most at any HBCU—into one state-of-the-art facility. Heidi, I thank you for your commitment to closing gaps in rural health care and serving your Lower Shore neighbors.

The University of Maryland Global Campus expands its “access imperative”—here in the U.S. and overseas. The university signed articulation agreements with community colleges in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, and Colorado.

Meanwhile, it's been awarded a new five-year contract by the DOD to educate our troops across Europe. Next year, UMGC celebrates 75 years of teaching American servicemembers on the continent. The European education services contract completes a trifecta of sorts, joining contracts for Asia and for the Middle East and Africa.

We often tout UMGC's global presence, but this is equally important: UMGC now has 100,000 alumni living and working in Maryland. UMGC may have “global” in its name, but we'd do well to remember its very *local* impact. Thank you, Greg.

Salisbury University continued its Fulbright dominance this year, named the nation's No. 1 producer of Fulbright Students among U.S. master's universities. It backed up that milestone with another: a record 12 students named Fulbright semifinalists for this coming round of grants. Half of SU's applicants made the semifinalist cut, and the group is the most diverse in SU history—boasting Pell grant students, first-gen and transfer students, students from many different racial and ethnic groups, and from the LGBTQ community.

If Salisbury's students are scholars in the classroom, they're warriors on the field. In April, SU Cheerleading brought home its first national championship. In May, Men's Lacrosse won the DIII national championship, the 13th in program history—a win that brought them to the White House this week to be honored by Vice President Harris. And then in June, Salisbury Softball was the DIII runner-up in the national championship game. What a run, Lyn. Congratulations.

UMB has won several gifts and grants promising to transform biomedical research and health care: A \$46 million DARPA-funded project to develop a bio-synthetic, shelf-stable artificial blood. A \$7 million gift from Bill and Joanne Conway to create *another* 218 full-ride Conway Scholarships for nursing students. A \$10 million gift from the Kahlert Foundation to support the School of Medicine's new multidisciplinary institute for addiction treatment and prevention. An \$18 million gift from Lawrence Hayman to strengthen health care pipeline programs on the Eastern Shore and expand clinical rotations and residencies there.

And proving its anchor institution *bona fides*, UMB launched the Center for Violence Prevention, a multidisciplinary initiative aimed at reducing violence in the city, and broke ground on its

newest BioPark building, 4MLK—the first phase of a \$320 million project planned in West Baltimore. Congratulations, Bruce.

UMCES's environmental leadership was underscored with a series of major grants: \$7.5 million from NOAA establishing a technology incubator to control harmful algal blooms; \$2 million from the U.S. Energy Department to explore how microalgae can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from power plants; with the University of Arizona, \$5 million from the USDA to examine effective farming practices in a rapidly drying climate.

And earlier this month, UMCES released its annual Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card, including for the first time an integrated environmental justice index measuring community vulnerability to environmental impacts. This report card is a vital resource for Maryland policymakers, and I thank Peter and his team for giving us this tool to assess Bay health.

The University of Baltimore is known for producing the graduates who advance, protect, and serve our democracy. Last fall, UBalt collected three national honors for its voter engagement efforts—recognized by *Washington Monthly*, by the All In Campus Democracy Challenge, and in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. The university's Schaefer Center for Public Policy deepened its commitment to swelling our corps of public servants—with targeted internships, a new public service minor, and a non-degree certificate.

Last month, UBalt unveiled a \$158 million redevelopment project that promises to transform the campus and the community. And in a commencement season filled with deeply affecting stories, I have to mention Kelly Gilliss and Kenneth Bond, who graduated from UBalt's Second Chance College Program for incarcerated students, and earned their degrees. A wonderful moment for an important program. Thank you to Sally Reed-Aro, who's here representing President Schmoke.

The USM at Southern Maryland celebrated a year marked by outreach designed to grow the region's college-going population. Local high school students are welcomed to the SMART building for summer programming, the local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers holds monthly STEM events on campus, and throughout the year, students from the College of Southern Maryland are invited to explore pathways to a four-year degree.

And this spring, Bowie State showed off its degree programs at USMSM—programs in criminal justice, computer science, nursing, and human resources—bringing the BSU campus a lot closer to the Southern Maryland students looking for the Bulldog experience. Thank you to Jean Combs, representing Dr. Abel, and to you, too, Aminta.

“Partnership” is how I'd describe the year that Bowie State just had. BSU is among several HBCUs working with IBM to stand up Cybersecurity Leadership Centers. It's sharing \$2 million from the Blackstone Charitable Foundation to expand student entrepreneurship. It's part of a

DOD-funded consortium led by Howard University focused on tactical autonomy. The \$90 million University Affiliated Research Center is the *only* one associated with the country's HBCUs. And the university just celebrated its first-ever NSF CAREER award. Chemistry Professor Jaqueline Smith's \$800,000 grant will support her breast cancer research.

And BSU's novel tech intern pipeline, featured in the *New York Times*, has drawn the attention of the country's Fortune 100s. Now they're banging down BSU's door, looking to link up with the university. That's how you do it, Aminta. Thank you.

All eyes at College Park are on solving the grand challenges of our age. This spring, the university distributed \$30 million in grants across campus to address existential threats like food insecurity, urban inequality, and climate change.

College Park is leading a consortium of DC universities in the 120 Initiative, using our evidence base to tackle the country's gun violence epidemic. The university's Terrapin Commitment is dedicating \$20 million in annual aid to Maryland students in financial need. And that fidelity to access continues with College Park's efforts to help students from small towns and rural communities get into—and through—college.

And just last month, College Park announced the expansion of its Do Good Institute, laying in more courses, more faculty and staff, more philanthropy-focused research, and more support for students with ideas and ventures that create social impact. Thank you, Darryll, for your leadership.

The Universities at Shady Grove won a huge endorsement of its work this year, when Google contributed \$500,000 to USG's efforts to build targeted degree pathways for students and strong career opportunities. USG celebrated one of those pathways last month, hosting a ceremony to recognize the 200+ students dually enrolled at a local high school *and* at Montgomery College. And to seal the deal, USG launched the JumpStart Scholarship—\$500 to all undergrads starting this fall in any USG program. Well done, Anne.

## THE FUTURE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Before I cede the podium, I want to touch on an issue that's been front of mind for all of us. This month, we expect a decision from the Supreme Court on affirmative action—whether the court will uphold or reject 45 years of precedent affirming the constitutionality of race-conscious admissions. And, moreover, whether it will uphold or reject student diversity as a compelling state interest.

Of course, *we* believe that diversity is a compelling interest, given persuasive evidence that diverse learning environments provide educational benefits that better prepare students for work, for life, and for leadership. It's the very purpose of higher education.

Certainly, diversity is a compelling interest to the USM, whose mission is “to educate and serve the people of Maryland, to advance equity, justice, and opportunity, and to produce the research and scholarship that improve lives.” The court’s decision doesn’t change this mission.

And whatever the landscape drawn by the court’s ruling, Maryland has an advantage. We are among the nation’s most racially and ethnically diverse states, and so the first part of our mission—to educate and serve the people of Maryland—means we *must* reflect the state’s population. Our universities can and will do this within the bounds of federal law.

But educating Maryland’s people means more than a yes/no decision on a candidate’s application. It means advancing college access and affordability—giving every learner who wants a USM education the ability to enroll here. And it means giving these same learners, across all backgrounds and experiences, the individualized academic, financial, and social supports that help them complete their degree.

These efforts are central to our strategic plan. I’m privileged to have been invited to serve on the Carnegie Postsecondary Commission, whose work is to innovate how the U.S. propels more underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation students to—and through—college and into fulfilling careers. Because we will not keep this country strong by leaving talent out.

Our universities have been preparing for this court ruling for some time, and are examining their admissions policies and practices to determine whether any need to be adjusted.

Nevertheless, we are Maryland’s *public* system of higher education. We serve the people of Maryland—all of them. And the Supreme Court’s coming decision will not stymie our ability to do just that.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report. Thank you.

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