



## Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

University of Maryland Global Campus | September 22, 2023

Thank you, Chair Gooden. I join you in welcoming our new board members, and I thank them for their eagerness to serve our students and our state.

While I'm talking about new family members, I'm delighted to share that Towson University's incoming president, Dr. Mark Ginsberg, will begin his tenure on Oct. 30. He brings 40-plus years of experience to TU, most recently as provost and executive vice president at George Mason University. That means this is the last board meeting for Dr. Melanie Perreault as interim president, and I know I speak for *all* of us when I say how indebted we are to you, Melanie. Thank you for your leadership.

Of course, before long, we'll have a new leader for UMCES. On Monday, we celebrated our dear friend and colleague, President Peter Goodwin, retiring after six years at the helm. Peter, I know you understand just how deeply you'll be missed. A couple of days ago, we initiated the search for Dr. Goodwin's successor—someone who will build on his accomplishments and on UMCES's strength, and position the System for national and global leadership in environmental science and climate action. The search committee is chaired by Regent Atticks, and I thank him for this important work. I also thank longtime UMCES Vice President Bill Dennison, who will serve as UMCES's interim leader.

I thank President Fowler and UMGC for hosting us today. As you heard, there are great things happening here. With \$450,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UMGC is identifying new models for closing the higher ed equity gap and quickly scaling up programs and pathways for underrepresented students.

UMGC has established new education alliances expanding access and affordability—with Northwell Health, New York's largest health care system; with New York's Manhattan Community College; with Nebraska's Metropolitan Community College; and with the College of DuPage, Illinois's largest community college.

And UMGC has launched a partnership with the technology firm Public Wireless to provide low-income students internet-enabled wireless tablets at no cost. I congratulate the entire UMGC

community on this work. It's little wonder that Greg was named one of *The Daily Record's* most Influential Marylanders.

I join Chair Gooden in congratulating our USM Staff Award winners, whom we honored this morning. And I shower congratulations on our new Elkins Professors:

- **Dr. Karen Cook-Bell** from Bowie State University, who will continue the work she started last year with the W. E. B. Du Bois Center for the Study of the Black Experience, encouraging and disseminating innovative research in African, African American, and African diaspora studies.
- **Dr. Norbert Myslinski** from the School of Dentistry at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, who will expand access to resources for children and teens with brain disorders such as autism, blindness, deafness, and dyslexia. He'll also launch a monthly speaker's series focusing on neurological and psychological conditions, and expand this work to other USM universities.
- **Dr. Michèle Schlehofer** from Salisbury University, who will expand on the successes of the REACH Initiative and create institutional change through the Center for Ethical Responsibility and Transformation, supporting SU's capacity to conduct interdisciplinary community-based action research.
- **Dr. Miao Yu**, from the University of Maryland, College Park, who will support a collaborative project—involving UMCES and UMES—to investigate novel sensing and robotics tools for the study of marine ecosystem dynamics.
- And **Dr. K. Halimeda Kilbourne** from UMCES who will deepen her work in curricular improvement by developing learning outcomes and implementing outcome assessments for UMCES's Marine-Estuarine Environmental Sciences program.
- I congratulate them all.

## NATIONAL RANKINGS

Every fall, we have a slate of national rankings to acknowledge. Just this week, *U.S. News and World Report* released its undergraduate rankings. And again this year, our universities didn't disappoint. College Park ranks 46th among National Universities, and 19th among publics. Its undergraduate engineering program is 19th overall, and several programs had Top 15 showings, including Management Information Systems, Aerospace, and Cybersecurity.

UMBC is ranked 12th in Best Undergraduate Teaching, 15th in Most Innovative Schools, and 27th in Undergraduate Research or Creative Projects. UMB's School of Nursing is No. 10 in the nation.

In the rankings of Regional Public Universities in the North, Frostburg State is 40th; UBalt, 36th; Salisbury, 18th; and Towson, sixth. And in the rankings of historically Black institutions, UMES and Bowie State both took their place in the Top 20—Top 10 among publics. With Coppin State, all three universities are in the nation's Top 35 HBCUs.

Looking beyond *U.S. News*, our universities landed on a staggering number of “best of” lists. *Forbes’* Top Colleges measures affordability, graduation rates, post-grad earnings, and outcomes for low-income students. Salisbury and Towson made the list. UMBC, at #74 overall, is #30 among publics. And College Park—up 10 spots to #34 overall since Dr. Pines assumed the presidency—is now #13 among publics.

*The Princeton Review* lists three USM schools among its best: UMBC, College Park, and Salisbury—which also got a nod for its Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons, named a U.S. Top 10 College Library.

Among *Money* magazine’s Best Colleges in America, you’ll find UMBC, College Park, Towson, Salisbury, Bowie, Frostburg, and UMES. And *Washington Monthly’s* College Guide and Rankings—measuring quality by social mobility, public service, and research—includes every eligible USM school in its best-value list for the Northeast.

UMB was among the 2023 recipients of the Maryland Green Registry Sustainability Leadership Awards, honoring its commitment to sustainable practices, measurable results, and continual improvement. And UMB’s commitment to equity and inclusion was recognized by *Forbes* for the second-straight year, named to its list of America’s Best Employers for Diversity. UMB also made the *Forbes* list of Maryland’s best employers overall.

On that same *Forbes* list of America’s Best Employers, College Park came in at #7 in Maryland. In *Newsweek’s* ranking of America’s Greatest Workplaces, College Park earned a four-star ranking, one star short of perfect. Campus Pride, dedicated to creating safe college environments for LGBTQ+ students, ranked College Park #1 in the U.S., with a perfect five-star rating. And in the Academic Ranking of World Universities—the “Shanghai Rankings”—College Park made the Top 50 universities worldwide, and came in at #11 among U.S. publics.

For the 14th straight year, UMBC has been named a Great College to Work For, and was one of just 11 universities nationwide—and one of only two R1s—to excel in all 10 recognition categories.

Towson University’s Hill-Lopes Scholars Program earned the 2023 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, higher ed’s largest and oldest publication dedicated to inclusion.

## UNIVERSITY GROWTH STUDENTS

As we talk about university growth—in buildings, programs, resources, revenues—the most exciting aspect has to be growth in our student body. It’s no secret that COVID derailed many students’ college-going plans. But this year, for the first time post-pandemic, we’re seeing

rebounding enrollments. While official numbers aren't yet final, we're celebrating growth from Western Maryland (Frostburg State) to the Eastern Shore (Salisbury University); SU's incoming class is its second-largest on the books.

Towson University is welcoming the largest incoming class in its 130-year history. And UMES is on track for its biggest first-year class in eight years, including the first cohort of STEM STARS, a program funded by \$2.5 million from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Maryland's students *do* understand the value of the education we offer, and they're betting that our value will pay off for them. It's a good bet.

But lest anyone think we're content with this uptick, let me mention initiatives that promise *future* growth. A few months ago, this board authorized our historically Black institutions to offer in-state tuition to out-of-state students who have limited access to an HBCU education. Coppin State and UMES signed on, and have since gotten national coverage for this move—one that promises to attract more out-of-state students to their campuses and to improve retention and completion among those already there.

Just last week, the USM at Hagerstown awarded more than \$80,000 in scholarships to students enrolled this academic year, one of the most effective ways of boosting new-student entry, retention, and completion.

A gift of \$1 million from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to UMBC will support promising STEM students with financial need.

## FACILITIES

Now, to our universities' *physical* growth. At UBalt, plans move forward for a new five-story university gateway—anchored by a marketplace and apartments—promising to invigorate the campus and the community.

UMBC is embarking on a \$94 million renovation of Sherman Hall, housing more than a dozen departments. The project encompasses a full building renovation to meet UMBC's needs for the next 30-plus years.

As part of a nearly \$30 million renovation to the School of Dentistry, UMB is building a dental surgery center in downtown Baltimore to alleviate long wait times for patients who need medical care. In addition, the University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing—a partnership of UMB, College Park, UMBC, and the Universities at Shady Grove—just signed an 11-year, \$11 million lease for office space in Rockville.

Across the College Park campus, construction is underway on new research buildings, upgraded classrooms, badly needed graduate housing, and other facilities, including the Barry P. Gossett Basketball Performance Center, named for our former colleague on this board.

With \$200,000 from the Richard A. Henson Foundation, Salisbury will enhance its physics program with the construction of a campus planetarium adjacent to Henson Science Hall. TU's College of Health Professions recently opened new locations for its Institute for Well-Being, a hub of programs giving students hands-on experience delivering public-facing health care and wellness services.

At Frostburg, an \$80 million upgrade to the Education and Health Sciences building is nearing completion. It will be the new home for the Brady Health Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Kinesiology and Nursing departments.

## PROGRAMS

Growth in our academic portfolio keeps the System responsive to emerging disciplines, benefiting students and market sectors alike. Among a half-dozen new bachelor's and master's programs at Bowie State, the university welcomed the first students in its Public Health and Information Technology program.

Towson's new interdisciplinary Autism Studies PhD, launched this fall, is one of few in the nation, allowing students to approach autism from several different angles to produce thoughtful and informed scholars in neurodiversity. UBalt's Merrick School of Business has launched a STEM-designated MS in Business–Finance so students can compete in a landscape reliant on data analytics. It emphasizes quantitative analysis, data-driven decision-making, and mathematical modeling.

Frostburg State has a new undergrad degree in Environmental Science, serving as a pathway to the new MS in Environmental Management in Sustainability, a partnership with UMCES. And both Frostburg and Bowie have received TEDCO funding to support innovation and entrepreneurship pathways.

Together with a number of new bachelor's and master's programs, UMES has launched a partnership with Wor-Wic Community College, allowing pharmacy students to earn a PharmD degree in just five years.

USG has launched an initiative, called "Hire U," to develop and document career-ready skills. Through the program, an app tracks students' progress in improving their skills in nine career competencies as they take part in workshops and campus events.

A Coppin State program in Data Science was approved for the USM at Southern Maryland, and work is underway to recruit students for the spring. And right here at UMGC, a BS in Environmental Health and Safety and an Accelerated MBA have been added to the university's academic portfolio.

UMES is celebrating a trio of exceptional outcomes: Students in its Physical Therapy program have exceeded a 95 percent first-time pass rate on the licensure exam every year since 2015. For five straight years, students in its Pharmacy program have clinched the highest first-time pass rate on their national boards among all HBCUs. And, finally, students in UMES's new Physician Assistant master's program earned the highest board pass rate in the *nation*.

## GIFTS AND GRANTS

We can credit surging philanthropy for growth in university resources. Towson University announced the completion of its largest-ever fundraising campaign—\$102 million to support research, student programs, capital improvements, and more.

Bowie State's BSU Bold fundraising effort reached its \$50 million goal more than two years ahead of schedule. Frostburg's Forging Futures campaign has hit its initial goal, raising \$25 million for students, the university, and the region. And the inaugural Coppin State University Gala—a celebration of philanthropy and student achievement—welcomed 550 guests and raised more than \$300,000.

New grants are growing our ability to serve the state and the nation. Nine Maryland-based nursing programs—including those at Bowie, Frostburg, Salisbury, and UMB—will share \$5.8 million in state support to address Maryland's nursing shortage.

UMBC's Dr. Steve Freeland is co-leading a \$1.8 million grant from the Human Frontier Science Program—a leading international agency supporting life sciences research—to predict the biochemical foundations of life beyond Earth.

UMES is one of 19 HBCUs sharing \$33 million from the USDA to support research and education at historically Black land-grant institutions. The five projects at UMES, focusing on food safety and agricultural innovation, won more than \$2.5 million combined.

Just this week, the NSF selected UMCES to lead the Global Nitrogen Innovation Center for Clean Energy and the Environment. Working with U.S. and international universities, UMCES will investigate an emerging technology called "green ammonia," which could prove critical in providing clean energy and supporting food production while mitigating climate change. The UMCES-led center is one of 21 funded through the NSF's inaugural Global Centers Competition.

UMCES' Chesapeake Biological Laboratory received a \$1 million gift from Brian Hochheimer and Marjorie Wax to study chemicals in waterways and their impact on environmental and human health. And earlier this summer, UMCES celebrated a \$1 million federal award for oyster restoration and resiliency research.

Over the summer, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded College Park nearly \$40 million to fast-track the conversion of its bus fleet from diesel vehicles to electric.

The School of Pharmacy at UMB was named a Top 10 pharmacy school for research funding. The school placed ninth, with nearly \$26 million in research grants and contracts. And the FDA renewed its funding for the University of Maryland Center of Excellence in Regulatory Science and Innovation—a partnership between College Park and UMB—with a new five-year, \$50 million cooperative agreement.

## INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE

You can trace so much of our institutional excellence to the individuals who lead our universities. UMB President Bruce Jarrell made the *Baltimore Business Journal's* Power 10, celebrating Greater Baltimore's 10 most effective leaders. USG Executive Director Anne Khademian was honored by *Bethesda Magazine* as one of six Women Who Inspire.

Frostburg President Ron Nowaczyk has been appointed to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. His dedication to assuring accountability and improvement in the academy will help us meet significant challenges over the next several years.

As I mentioned earlier, UMGC President Greg Fowler was named a *Daily Record* 2023 Influential Marylander. Joining him are Coppin State President Anthony Jenkins; Ron Weich, dean of the UBalt School of Law; SU's Jim Berkman, the all-time winningest coach in NCAA men's lacrosse history; and, gratefully, me. It's wonderful to see the System so well represented among recognized leaders, and I was proud to be included.

Bowie State President Aminta Breaux was elected for a second term as board chair of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, the nation's oldest historically Black conference. And UMBC President Valerie Sheares Ashby was invited to deliver the opening keynote at the annual MACo conference, sharing her thoughts with Maryland most powerful leaders on confronting the challenges of our changing world.

## ENGAGEMENT, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

With a commitment to social, environmental, and economic justice, our universities are living their mission of servant leadership.

When the Biden administration made \$20 billion in grants available to advance environmental justice, where did the announcement happen? At Coppin State University. Several of us were honored to join President Jenkins in welcoming Vice President Kamala Harris to Coppin, and we're excited about this commitment to environmental equity and action.

Gov. Wes Moore chose Salisbury University to stress the importance of internet access and to share how the Affordable Connectivity Program can help bridge the digital divide on the Eastern Shore and beyond. And SU's Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship was one of the first 20 organizations to receive funding from TEDCO's new Maryland Makerspace initiative. The center will use these funds to create community showcases and exhibitions, launch business development initiatives, and support a maker-in-residence program.

TU's vital role as an anchor institution was recognized by the Maryland Department of Commerce with the approval of a new Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zone next to the university. The designation helps TU leverage its people, programs, and resources to attract investment, spur economic development, and create jobs.

UBalt has been named Community Partner of the Year by the Baltimore chapter of Urban Alliance for its program placing high school students into paid internships that lead to college. And the Second Chance College Program, which UBalt pioneered in Maryland, is gathering steam across the System. This fall, nine men incarcerated at the Jessup Correctional Institution are pursuing sociology degrees through Bowie State University.

With a \$5.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, UMB's School of Social Work is partnering with Coppin State and UMBC to expand training for school-based mental health providers. The grant funds the placement of 105 students a year in local public schools, where the need for mental health counseling has exploded. The effort is intended not only to expand but to *diversify* Maryland's corps of social work professionals, so that they reflect the children and communities they serve.

And while the summer months often signal down time in higher ed, that's certainly not the case on our campuses, where young learners flock for development and enrichment. More than 60 high schoolers from Maryland and DC participated in the annual weeklong Girl's STEM Academy at College Park. With a focus on creativity, innovation, and engineering, they took part in hands-on challenges addressing real-world problems.

Meanwhile, UMBC's Center for Global Engagement welcomed its inaugural cohort of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. UMBC was among 28 U.S. colleges selected to host 700 community leaders from several Sub-Saharan African nations.

And through a three-week program at UMES, high school students from across the Eastern Shore were introduced to the teaching profession and took their very first steps toward



becoming educators. This is how you build the strong teacher pipeline we say is essential not only to our students' success but, ultimately, to our System's.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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