



## Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

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Thank you, Madame Chair. I begin by echoing your earlier words about Regent Doug Peters. Doug's life was defined by service—service to his country, his community, to our state and our students. His legacy animates our work going forward, and our dedication to that work is the most fitting way we can honor him. We miss him deeply.

As we come together for our first meeting of 2024, we have an opportunity to reflect on the year that just ended. You have a copy of the System's *2023 Annual Report*, and I hope you'll take some time to celebrate what we've accomplished.

As we mark Black History Month, I congratulate our colleagues who made the *Baltimore Sun's* list of 25 Black Marylanders to Watch: University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) President Heidi Anderson, Dr. Esa Davis, associate vice president for community health at UMB, and Larry Stewart, head coach of the men's basketball team at Coppin State University (CSU). Their excellence is inspiring.

In recounting our good news, I'll start with our host this morning, the University of Baltimore (UBalt). We heard President Schmoke and Provost Mueller talk about their vision for UBalt, but I want to give a nod to the work it's *already* doing every day. UBalt's Second Chance College Program, educating—and graduating—incarcerated students, has been such a light in Maryland. As has its work on one of Gov. Moore's top priorities: developing the next generation of public servants. And now, with its new Urban Conflict Manager Program, UBalt will train the city's Safe Streets leaders in conflict management and violence prevention. This commitment, and these connections, make UBalt such a powerful force for good.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that President Schmoke *himself* has been powerful force for good. Pending approval by the MLB and league owners, Kurt will be part of a new Baltimore-based ownership group for our beloved Orioles. So you can line up for some good seats this season—but you'll have to get behind me.

Broadening our sights to good news spanning our universities: *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked the nation's Best Online Degrees, evaluating nearly 2,000 bachelor's and master's programs. Six of our universities were recognized for a total of 19 programs: Salisbury University (SU), Towson University (TU), UBalt, and UMBC were ranked for programs including business, education, and IT. The School of Nursing at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) was

recognized among the nation's best in two programs, including a #3 ranking in nursing administration. And the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) was listed among the best in 10 business and engineering programs, including several top 10 rankings.

Earlier this week, the Fulbright Program announced the nation's top producers of Fulbright Scholars and Students. UMB was recognized for the number of Fulbright Scholars it produces, and UMBC and Towson University, for the number of Fulbright Students. Recognized in both categories—scholars *and* students—is UMD, one of only 12 U.S. universities to make both lists. Well done to you all.

Elsewhere across the USM, Bowie State University (BSU) launched its Esports Center last week, a state-of-the-art gaming hub where gamers—on and off BSU's competitive team—can connect with one another and polish their skills. Also last week, President Breaux and her team welcomed U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to campus, celebrating BSU's work in opening pathways that diversify the school counseling and mental health professions—efforts that ultimately make it easier for underserved people to get the care they need. Sec. Cardona also learned how Bowie State is bringing more Black men into teaching and supporting them to success.

UMB also hosted a member of President Biden's cabinet. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra discussed the state of women's health care and reproductive rights with President Jarrell, Gov. Moore, and the UMB community. It was a timely discussion, given that Gov. Moore announced this week that UMB will get \$10.6 million to shore up abortion access in Maryland with its Abortion Care Clinical Training Program. This grant joins some huge awards over the last several weeks: \$30 million to prevent rehospitalization among IV drug users, \$9 million to improve vaccine efficacy, \$7 million to innovate trauma triage technology for mass casualty events. The list goes on, but, unfortunately, I cannot.

UMB also celebrated the opening of the Embrace Resource Center's new space in West Baltimore. A partnership among UMB, local nonprofits, city agencies, and private businesses, the center will establish the Eutaw Street Corridor as a safe, thriving community for those living and working there.

Coppin State University is showing that same commitment to community. The CSU nursing program—along with programs at Johns Hopkins and Morgan State—is partnering with the Baltimore City School System to address nurse shortages in its schools. The five-year, \$14 million program is aimed at tackling nursing shortages in the short term and growing the pipeline of nurses who choose school-based care over the long term.

It's this kind of excellence that Coppin's BE MORE capital campaign advances. The \$25 million campaign, the largest in Coppin's history, will support student achievement and retention, academic and research excellence, athletics, and operational sustainability.

Salisbury University has announced that its Museum of Eastern Shore Culture will open this summer next to SU Downtown. The museum will feature exhibits on local and indigenous cultures and include items from the carving collection formerly displayed at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art. And, of course, I know Sea Gull Nation was very proud to see SU Athletics Hall of Famer Dan Quinn named head coach of the Washington Commanders. I can tell some of you are thinking about jumping out of the line queuing up for Kurt and heading over to the one for Lyn.

UMBC is deep in the work of advancing diversity and inclusion in STEM—from its Meyerhoff Scholars Program to its Center for Women in Technology. Now you can add another program to this effort. UMBC has joined the National Academies' Action Collaborative on Transforming Trajectories for Women of Color in Tech to build new pathways in tech education and careers for underrepresented women. Also at UMBC, the Center for Research in Emergent Manufacturing is launching a \$3 million project to work with the U.S. Army on digitizing its supply chain.

At Towson University, the Albert S. Cook Library earned the inaugural Library Excellence in Access and Diversity Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. And after welcoming its largest-ever freshman class last fall, TU broke its record for incoming student applications—more than 20,000 of them. And since we're on a bit of a sports theme, I'll mention that TU alum Kristin Juszczyk made worldwide headlines when Taylor Swift wore one of her custom jackets to a Kansas City Chiefs game. She's since landed a well-deserved licensing deal with the NFL.

The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) was recognized with the 2023 Partner of the Year Award from the International Council of E-Commerce Consultants, the world's largest cybersecurity technical certification body.

And UMGC had some wonderful coverage of one of its cybersecurity graduates: Jamel Shorts completed college courses while still a high school student in Prince George's County, then earned his associate degree from Prince George's Community College, then transferred seamlessly into UMGC, where he graduated in December—early, by the way—with a bachelor's degree, a job bearing top-secret security clearance, and *no debt*. For a university with “global” in its name, UMGC's impact is profoundly local.

Speaking of local: At Frostburg State University, graduate students in the Department of Kinesiology are working with local firefighters, examining how their on-the-job gear affects their stability, strength, and fitness. The goal is to improve firefighter performance, reduce injuries, and protect public safety. And two FSU professors, Dr. James Saku and Dr. Alemseged Abbay, have been appointed to Gov. Moore's Commission on African Affairs, in recognition of their professional and personal ties to Africa and to Maryland's diverse African population.

On the heels of celebrating a record year for young oysters in the Chesapeake Bay, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) student Imani Black was featured on WYPR to discuss the region's oyster population. In addition to pursuing her master's at UMCES, she's the founder and CEO of Minorities in Aquaculture, an advocacy group dedicated to diversifying the cultivation and study of marine life. I met Imani when I visited Horn

Point a couple of years ago, and she's the embodiment of UMCES's incredible impact, locally and globally.

Pharmacy graduates from UMES have achieved the highest first-time licensure pass rate of any HBCU pharmacy school for the third-straight year—a remarkable accomplishment. Meanwhile, anticipation grows around UMES's historic School of Veterinary Medicine. When it enrolls its first class in 2026, it'll be the only veterinary program in Maryland and just the second at a U.S. HBCU. And last week, UMES hosted the 4th annual Man the Shore Summit to recruit men of color into teaching and to better serve the boys and young men in our classrooms.

A joyous tradition at the University of Maryland, College Park was featured in *The Washington Post*. Every year, a few lucky UMD hopefuls are greeted at their homes by Testudo and the UMD marching band, whose brass section literally “trumpets” the fact that these Early Action candidates have been accepted to the flagship. A terrific feel-good story. Also at UMD, Dr. Jeanette Epps, a Clark School graduate in aerospace engineering, will soon live the dream of *all* aerospace engineers, when she flies aboard a Dragon spacecraft to the International Space Station. There, she'll begin a half-year stint as part of the crew.

These good-news items at UMD join several more: a \$15 million NIH grant to study how the flu is transmitted; UMD's leadership in a federal consortium to improve the trustworthiness and safety of AI; a multidisciplinary team's \$5 million NSF grant to develop technology that fights food insecurity; UMD taking its place among *Newsweek's* Greatest Workplaces for Women.

And now to our regional centers: Rep. Steny Hoyer, Gov. Moore, and his cabinet toured the USM at Southern Maryland (USMSM) this month, learning how the center partners with the Navy in autonomous technology development. Meanwhile, 900 students from all three Southern Maryland counties converged on USMSM for tours and networking with employers, and 60 engineering students from Charles County Public Schools came to talk about the center's work with Pax River and explore local education and job opportunities.

The USM at Hagerstown hosted 100 members of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, showing off its Hospitality Center in the city's downtown, which trains students in the culinary arts and hospitality management.

The Universities at Shady Grove launched the Joann Boughman Innovation Fellows program, honoring our beloved senior vice chancellor emerita. The annual fellowship supports four people leading innovation in academia, industry, government, and nonprofits—innovation that meets the needs of local students and employers. A fitting tribute.

I should share that, in recent weeks, I've talked extensively about the power and the value of our regional centers with lawmakers in Annapolis—how they serve students who simply can't get a college education otherwise; how they fill acute workforce needs in their local communities; how they drive regional economic growth. I am unreservedly bullish on our regional centers, and I thank Dr. Abel, Dr. Khademian, and Dr. Ashby for their leadership.

That brings me to my concluding remarks on the legislative session and the governor's proposed FY25 budget. His proposal includes \$2.2 billion in state support for the USM. It's a cut of \$45.3 million—or 2.2 percent—from last year's budget. Despite the cut, the budget does include funding to cover COLA and merit increases for System employees. There's nearly \$5 million in additional funding for UMES, part of a federal/state partnership addressing decades of chronic underfunding of land-grant HBCUs. And the budget includes \$35.5 million in new funding for all three of our HBCUs, the third installment of the 2021 settlement.

We recognize that this budget could have been worse, given the deficit that Maryland is facing. At the same time, every single dollar we get is vital to what we do for Maryland's students. And that's where our focus is. Therefore, if any funds come back to the System, I've asked that they be directed to financial aid for students in need. We've come so far and dedicated so many dollars to our promise of affordability. We have to keep this momentum going.

This legislative session has been incredibly busy, by any standard. More than 2,500 bills have been filed, and several affect the System and our universities. The testimony we've offered on these bills has been powerful, and that's a credit to the engagement and collaboration of countless people at all of our universities. It's been remarkable. I thank everyone who's so effectively advocating for us and for our students—in and out of Annapolis—every single day.

I see that advocacy pay off every time I watch our elected officials use our universities as a backdrop to announce plans and policies important to Maryland and the country; every time our people are appointed to influential positions by state and national leaders; every time these same leaders meet with our presidents, tour our schools, learn about our programs, and, yes, fund them. They *know* we're essential to the strength and vibrancy of Maryland, and I thank all of you for affirming that very fact.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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