



## Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

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Thank you, Chair Gooden. What a terrific morning it's been already, with our celebration of USM faculty. It's an honor to recognize their excellence.

I thank our host, Bowie State University (BSU). As you could tell from President Breaux's presentation, BSU isn't letting up—and neither are its students. Last month, Biology major Daliyah Brown won first place at the Emerging Researchers National Conference in Washington, DC, for her work on medicinal plants. Daliyah is part of a multi-university research team that works with one of the 2024 Faculty Award winners we *just* honored this morning, Dr. Anne Osano. What a great full-circle moment.

Meanwhile, a team of four BSU Business students—all of them, Center for Financial Advancement Fellows—won \$40,000 in the Experian pitch competition for their app that helps students pay off their college loan debt within five years of graduation.

When Rep. Steny Hoyer invited Dr. Breaux to President Biden's State of the Union address last month, he invoked her dedication to combatting our nation's mental health crisis. And so it's fitting that, earlier this year, Bowie State became only the third U.S. HBCU to offer a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision. Thank you, President Breaux.

### A SYSTEM OF STRENGTH

Let me broaden my scope to the University System writ large. Earlier this month, *U.S. News & World Report* released its 2024 Graduate School rankings, and the USM shone.

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) has more than 40 top 25 rankings in programs and specialties. The College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Science ranked #15 in Artificial Intelligence, and the College of Education and the School of Public Health climbed into the top 25 overall.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) is well-represented among top 25 programs. The School of Nursing again ranked in the top 10 overall among publics, and the school moved up in all six categories in which it was ranked.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) was recognized for statistics, fine arts, physics, public affairs, engineering, and more.

And, in fact, every eligible USM university was recognized: Education at Frostburg State University (FSU), Social Work at Salisbury University (SU), Computer Science at BSU and Towson University (TU), Rehabilitation Counseling at Coppin State University (CSU) and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). The Clinical Law program at the University of Baltimore (UBalt) School of Law ranks #5 nationwide.

Of course, the System's excellence shows in ways independent of rankings. Last week, we formalized a historic partnership with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, establishing a framework to facilitate prison education programs at all USM universities and all Maryland correctional facilities.

We're the first higher education system in the nation to enter into such an agreement. The point, of course, is not only to grow certificate and degree opportunities for incarcerated students, but ultimately, to strengthen the families and communities they return to. I thank the University of Baltimore and Bowie State for showing us the way, and I thank Regent Wood, Regent Hur, and Senior Vice Chancellor Wrynn for their leadership in getting this done.

Another piece of Systemwide news I'm proud to share: The USM has joined the Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong Alliance in response to the devastating Key Bridge collapse. We've committed our university expertise in several areas of critical need, including economic modeling, supply chain management, civil engineering, transportation, and water and environmental impact. And should the work stoppage at the port be extended, we're prepared to offer education, skills development, and career services to port employees. We're grateful we can contribute in these times of challenge for our city and state.

Here's another Systemwide effort: As we prepare for the upcoming election, we're meeting the foundational obligation of the American academy—namely, to educate for democracy. The USM is one of 14 applicants nationwide to receive poll worker funding as part of the federal Help America Vote College Program.

With money from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, each of our universities will pay students to be trained as election judges. College Park will take the lead in developing the training modules in partnership with the Maryland State Election Commission. And we'll work to place students in election precincts without easy access to poll workers. The objective isn't only to support transparency and confidence in the 2024 election, but to start our students on a path of engaged citizenship over their lifetimes. I thank Associate Vice Chancellor Nancy Shapiro for her leadership in this vitally important work.

## UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

And while I'm on civic engagement, it was gratifying to see UBalt's NextGen Leaders program get attention for its work to develop and replenish our public servant workforce. In less than two years, UBalt has placed more than 200 students in paid internships or fellowships with the state, the city, and municipalities across Maryland.

Provost Mueller, I congratulate you, as well, on recruiting LaVonda Reed, dean of the School of Law at Georgia State University, as UBalt's new law dean. She's the first woman in the role, a historic appointment, and I look forward to working with her.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) also welcomes new leadership this summer. Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, dean of the College of Science at George Mason University, takes the reins on July 1, and I know he's excited to build on UMCES's established strength for even greater impact.

That strength is demonstrated in an UMCES-led research group just awarded a National Science Foundation grant to address salt contamination of water supplies in tidal rivers—contamination that threatens drinking water for billions of people around the world. And I offer congratulations to Dr. Ming Li and Dr. Matthew Gray, UMCES faculty named U.S. Fulbright Scholars for the upcoming year. Dr. Li will work with Portuguese scientists on developing warning systems for harmful algal blooms in coastal waters, and Dr. Gray goes to Sweden to test hypotheses about oyster types that may thrive in warmer, more acidic oceans. Congratulations, President Dennison.

UMD has launched the Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland, supporting collaborative faculty research and experiential learning in AI, with a focus on developing responsible AI technology and ethical AI leaders. Also at College Park, a \$27.2 million gift from Professor Emeritus Michael Brin and his wife Eugenia will endow the Brin Mathematics Research Center, establish the Brin Endowed Chair in Mathematics, and pilot the Brin Maryland Mathematics Camp. The gift is the largest-ever to the math department, and the university's fourth-largest outright gift from an individual. Congratulations, President Pines.

And, finally, UMD celebrates three undergraduates named 2024 Goldwater Scholars. Yash Anand, Malcolm Maas, and Jerry Shen join 435 Goldwater Scholars nationwide—including two from their USM sister university, UMBC. Retrievers Nathaniel Glover and Gabriel Otubu are also Goldwater winners.

There's something of a space race going on at UMBC right now. In February, a 15-year R&D journey culminated with the launch of an instrument called "HARP II" as part of NASA's PACE mission. Designed and built by UMBC scientists and engineers, HARP II has been sending data back to Earth analyzing aerosol particles and clouds as a means of illuminating our air quality, climate, and climate change.

And *then* UMBC told us it's going to the moon. Astronauts will deploy UMBC's Lunar Environment Monitoring Station, an autonomous seismometer, on the surface of the moon as part of NASA's forthcoming Artemis III lunar landing mission. It's humankind's first return to the lunar surface in more than 50 years. Well done, President Sheares Ashby.

Not to be outdone, Salisbury University also has its eyes on the final frontier. SU has inked a landmark partnership with NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. The SU Space Act Agreement will offer learning experiences for Salisbury students at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility; fortify

the agency's presence on campus; and develop the state's aerospace workforce with new coursework and professional development opportunities.

Salisbury celebrated another landmark with the launch of The Graduate School at SU. With 14 master's and two doctoral programs—as well as post-baccalaureate, post-master's, and postdoctoral certificates—the school will grow graduate enrollment, expand opportunities for graduate students, and elevate SU's profile and standings in national rankings. Congratulations, President Lepre.

The National Security Agency has validated the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) as a National Center of Academic Excellence for its cybersecurity programming. The validation of UMGC's Master of Science in Cybersecurity Technology runs through the 2029 academic year. Also at UMGC, an exciting partnership with the Major League Soccer Players Association will open access and discount tuition for hundreds of professional soccer players and their families.

And next week, Chair Gooden and I will celebrate UMGC Europe's Class of 2024 at the Ramstein Airbase in Germany. It's the university's largest commencement ceremony in Europe. While there, we'll commemorate another deeply meaningful milestone: 75 years of teaching American service members on the European continent. UMGC was the *very first* U.S. university to send faculty overseas to teach active-duty military personnel. And it's an honor to celebrate UMGC's commitment to serving those who serve this nation. Senior Vice President Sergi, congratulations.

Many of us took part in another meaningful celebration as we inaugurated Dr. Mark Ginsberg as Towson University's 15th president. It was a lovely ceremony and, truly, "a great day to be a Tiger."

Days before the inauguration, President Ginsberg helped open the Sandra R. Berman Center for Humanity, Tolerance, and Holocaust Education in the College of Liberal Arts. The Berman Center is the only Holocaust education center in Maryland and is meant for people of all ages and all backgrounds. The center will share the lessons of history and the Holocaust, illuminate the destructive power of racism, antisemitism, hate, and bigotry, and offer academic programs in civil and human rights. Thank you, President Ginsberg.

An important space on the Frostburg State campus was dedicated last week. Gov. Moore and Lt. Gov. Miller were on hand for the official opening of Frostburg's newest building, the \$82 million Education and Health Sciences Center, a state-of-the-art facility for students filling critical workforce gaps in Maryland's classrooms, clinics, and hospitals.

And I want to commend Frostburg on a success that's illustrative for all of us attentive to student enrollment. Frostburg saw an 11.2 percent increase among transfer students this spring vs. last spring. Without question, it's a testament to the university's strong and growing collaborations

with regional community colleges and its dedication to building accessible pathways into Frostburg. Thank you, Vice President Delia.

Coppin State President Anthony Jenkins was elected to the board of the Baltimore Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, where he'll help shape economic policy and strengthen partnerships between financial institutions and the communities they serve. And together with USM Vice Chancellor Michele Masucci, President Jenkins was chosen for TEDCO's new Equitech Growth Commission. The Commission manages Cultivate Maryland, an initiative promoting better inclusion in Maryland's technology ecosystem.

Embracing its anchor obligations, Coppin is partnering with Baltimore leaders to cultivate the next generation of public servants. The HBCU Fellowship Initiative provides the city with a diverse talent pool and students with career and development opportunities, on-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring. Thank you, President Jenkins.

From local to global: At UMB, a three-year education and clinical care agreement with the University of Rwanda School of Dentistry will focus on patients born with cleft lip and cleft palate—conditions that, untreated, can lead to malnutrition and starvation. The aim is to ensure that 5,000+ Rwandans awaiting treatment can receive life-saving care. The partnership was facilitated by global nonprofit Operation Smile, whose cofounder is UMB alumnus Dr. William Magee.

And I'm thrilled to share that the long-heralded Institute for Health Computing—a partnership among UMB, College Park, and the University of Maryland Medical System—is up and running in North Bethesda. The institute uses advanced computing and a massive cache of de-identified patient data to create a *learning* health system that improves care and outcomes across patient demographics and closes gaps of equity by transforming community-focused research. This is a very big deal—for Maryland and its people—and I congratulate President Jarrell and President Pines.

As part of UMES's bid to develop the next generation of aviation professionals, it's sharing in \$13.5 million in Federal Aviation Administration grants to attract and train students for careers as pilots, engineers, maintenance technicians, and drone operators.

And UMES's Gospel Choir put on a show-stopper at Madison Square Garden last month, performing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing" ahead of the New York Knicks–Detroit Pistons game. President Anderson, I know how proud you were watching from the stands. Congratulations.

At our regional centers, the USM at Hagerstown (USMH) was named Small Business of the Year by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce. The honor illustrates the center's extraordinary value to the region—as an anchor, a partner, a convener, and a vehicle for high-quality workforce and economic development. Thank you, Dr. Ashby.

Programs are growing at the USM at Southern Maryland. This fall, Bowie State begins offering a master's in special education at the center. This is a huge deal, given that the Kennedy Krieger Institute is co-located on the campus. BSU students will be able to work with the institute's teachers, staff, and students to advance special education practice and serve Southern Maryland families. Plus, UMD's Clark School of Engineering is developing a master's program in Test and Evaluation of Autonomy, advancing the region's leadership in autonomous systems. Great things are happening, Dr. Abel.

And the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) just got a campaign's worth of exposure with its feature in an Amazon TV show called "The College Tour." Ten USG students tell their stories in the 30-minute profile, and talk about the intimacy of the USG community, its rich diversity, engaged faculty, financial aid opportunities, and USG's laser focus on career readiness and job placement. If you haven't watched it, you absolutely should. Congratulations, Dr. Khademian.

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Let me take a moment to recap briefly the just-ended legislative session. Every year, I say that it was a busy one. And, every year, that's true. But this year—with 3,480 bills filed; with more than 280 affecting the System directly; with our people testifying on nearly 50—we were in overdrive.

I thank everyone who showed their skill, their stamina, and the strength of their collaboration with one another. The session was the first with USM Vice Chancellor Susan Lawrence in the role, and I thank her and her team for guiding us through a hectic 90 days with grace and good humor intact.

I mentioned in February that our operating budget of \$2.2 billion reflects a cut of more than 2 percent—a cut we'll manage *without* onerous tuition hikes.

We were fortunate in that generous capital funding continued, with \$268 million allocated for FY25. Not only did all projects in the Governor's Capital Budget receive approval; we had some surprises in terms of windfalls. Notable items in the budget are \$26 million for a new School of Social Work building at UMB; \$9 million for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Arts and Humanities Building here at Bowie State, and \$25 million for facilities renewal Systemwide. And then, in late legislative action, the General Assembly added \$1 million each to Bowie State, Coppin State, and UMES to help address a backlog of deferred maintenance.

Facing a deficit, Maryland has some tough times ahead. But it's in times of challenge, especially, that we value the goodwill and good faith of our leaders and the trust they've placed in us to do the work that fuels Maryland's growth, prosperity, and strength.

## STRENGTHENING TITLE IX COMPLIANCE

One final item before I cede the podium: Chair Gooden mentioned in her opening comments that, later in the meeting, she'll speak to the Title IX workgroups this Board is standing up.

But I, too, want to address the Title IX misconduct at UMBC. I want everyone here, and everyone listening in, to know how seriously the System and the Board take the findings of the Department of Justice, and how deeply sorry we are for the pain suffered by too many students for too long. I want you to know that we will be accountable for strengthening our policies and processes going forward. And we will work every day to prevent the misconduct that happened at UMBC from ever happening again—at any university within the System.

What happened at UMBC hurt students deeply. It caused harm we can't undo. What we *can* do is do *better*.

I'm grateful for the leadership of President Sheares Ashby, who recognized the gravity of this situation as soon as she arrived at UMBC, who coordinated closely with the System and with the Board, and who—from Day 1—has been making needed changes in UMBC's structure, policies, and personnel. I know she and her team will do everything in their power to renew and affirm UMBC's culture of care and accountability, to regain the trust of the university's students, and to live up to UMBC's core values.

Every student has the right to learn in an environment free from abuse, harassment, and discrimination. Our work isn't done until *all* students can say that we've met that standard.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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