



Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

University of Maryland Global Campus | December 20, 2024

Thank you, Madame Chair.

I'm well aware that, for many, this meeting is among the last items between work and the winter break. And so my holiday gift to all of you is a comparatively brief Board report. Of course, that effort is helped by the fact that we met four short weeks ago.

UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

Let me begin with our host today, the University of Maryland Global Campus. As President Fowler noted, there's a lot to celebrate. Recent months have seen transformative grants, one from the Gates Foundation to model strategies for reaching underserved students, and one from the U.S. Department of Labor to expand apprenticeship pathways to high-demand technology jobs. UMGC has launched a more flexible MBA, and a program giving college credit for military service experience.

UMGC's students are shining on the regional stage. The university's cyber teams took first, second, *and* fourth place in a recent Mid-Atlantic competition. Almost a clean sweep, Dr. Fowler. Congratulations.

Let's broaden our focus to the System writ large. Bowie State University has announced a new tuition-free program helping 75 Maryland teachers earn National Board Certification. The initiative focuses on boosting the number of Black men who achieve the distinction, enhancing teacher quality—and education equity—across Maryland. President Breaux, you know how important this initiative is to implementing the K12 Blueprint. Thank you for your leadership.

The University of Maryland, College Park is celebrating the third-largest gift in Maryland Athletics history—\$18 million from alumnus Stephen Schanwald, formerly a senior leader in the Chicago Bulls organization and a sports marketing pioneer. Of the overall gift, \$10 million will go to the Athletics Department and \$8 million to the Smith School of Business, endowing its Sports Management Program and providing student scholarships. Congratulations, President Pines.

The BioPark at University of Maryland, Baltimore just received \$2.2 million in city and state funds to support 35,000 square feet of flex lab space in the soon-to-open 4 MLK tower. The project is essential to helping researchers move their ideas from the lab to the marketplace and

critical to sustaining the state's competitiveness in life sciences innovation. I thank Regent Anderson for his invaluable support at Commerce, and I congratulate President Jarrell.

Let me mention those last two schools again. On the NSF's latest survey of research productivity, the combined R&D expenditures of College Park and UMB—linked in the survey as one research enterprise—reached almost \$1.4 billion, up \$157 million over the previous year. This total ranked 18th among all U.S. universities and 11th among publics. There's a lot of life-changing, world-changing work in those numbers. Thank you both.

Coppin State University has joined Baltimore City's Live Near Your Work program, fostering employee homeownership in nearby neighborhoods in a bid to strengthen the fabric of its West Baltimore community. Grants to employees start at \$50,000 to help cover down payments and closing costs. I know this program well from my time at UMB, and it was a game-changer for our employees and our neighborhoods alike. Thank you, President Jenkins.

Towson University is one of only 22 U.S. universities to be designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in cyber operations by the NSA, a designation that will last through 2030. TU is also an NSA Center of Academic Excellence in cyber defense education. Congratulations, President Ginsberg.

The University of Baltimore's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation has inked a new partnership with the Funding Innovation Studio to improve access to capital for underrepresented entrepreneurs. Part of the famed LabCentral ecosystem out of Cambridge, Massachusetts, the program boosts funding opportunities and inclusion for founders of color and for women. Congratulations, President Schmoke.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is also celebrating a new partnership. Last month, United Airlines announced UMES as the latest partner in its Aviate program. Aviate helps student-pilots earn advanced certifications, accrue flight hours, and eventually land jobs with the airline. Congratulations, President Anderson.

I want to group our HBCUs together for a moment. The college resource site OnlineU studied the return on investment among the country's historically Black institutions, taking into account college costs, grants and scholarships, loan payments and interest, and median salary over time. For overall ROI, Bowie State came in second nationwide and Coppin State, sixth. For first-year salaries, Coppin ranked second and Bowie, seventh. Among small HBCUs with the best alumni salaries, Coppin took second place, and UMES, seventh. There's a lot to be proud of here, and I thank our HBCU leaders.

Salisbury University held its biannual Shore Hatchery competition, sponsored by the Ratcliffe Foundation, inviting entrepreneurs to vie for \$100,000 in prize money. The top award went to Marins Med for its specialized prosthetic device improving functionality for amputees. In the decade since Salisbury launched the Hatchery, award winners, together, have notched profits of \$35 million a year and created nearly 1,200 local jobs. Thank you, President Lepre.

Frostburg State University is once again honored by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Its 2024 Most Engaged Campus designation recognizes its success in student voting participation. In fact, fully half of our universities were acknowledged for their outstanding efforts to grow student voting: Towson, UBalt, College Park, UMB, and UMBC were recognized alongside Frostburg. Congratulations, Mr. Delia.

An interdisciplinary team at UMBC has won a \$3.4 million NIH grant to explore alternatives to health interventions for vulnerable people—in a bid to curtail the country’s overreliance on clinical medicine. Partnering with a major Medicaid health plan, the team will build a machine-learning system to identify patients with social stressors—like food insecurity or unstable housing—and determine how best to connect them with long-term social supports. Thank you, President Sheares Ashby.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science is leading a collaboration with China, aimed at cutting emissions of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas. UMCES researchers traveled to Zhejiang University to meet with their Chinese counterparts and begin drafting the Hangzhou Joint Statement, accelerating progress on U.S. State Department commitments regarding bilateral U.S.–China cooperation on GHG reductions. Incredible leadership, Dr. Miralles-Wilhelm.

Turning to our regional higher education centers, the USM at Southern Maryland hosted 150 Maryland Corps members contributing a year of paid service to the state. It’s a program of the Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation intended to nurture personal and professional growth, while targeting young talent to areas of greatest need. How vital to bring this program to Southern Maryland, where some participants might stay and do the region a world of good. I understand they’re looking to bring back a huge group this spring, Dr. Abel. Congratulations.

The USM at Hagerstown held its annual Feaste & Frolic fundraiser, which netted more than \$116,000 for student scholarships. It’s the very first time that total gifts eclipsed the \$100,000 mark. Thank you, Dr. Ashby.

Last week, the Universities at Shady Grove was named a Center of Excellence by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for its expansive work in driving opportunities for local entrepreneurs. The designation unlocks resources that will help USG support small companies looking to do business with the Treasury Department. USG is among the first five organizations in the country to earn the designation. I was honored to join you, Dr. Khademian.

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Before I close, I want to acknowledge Dr. Justin Dunmyer, interim chair of the Frostburg faculty, and Vice Chair Shoshana Brassfield, who went to some effort to come out here today and speak during public comment. I’m fortunate to have met with the leadership of Frostburg’s Faculty Senate a few times since last summer, when the university announced its plan to close a \$7.7

million structural deficit. I've been grateful for the candor and counsel of both Dr. Dunmyer and Dr. Brassfield.

As you're aware, part of the plan to restore Frostburg's financial stability involves faculty retrenchment. It's not an action any of our universities takes lightly. It's not an action the *System* takes lightly.

But it is necessary—together with several other cost-cutting measures now in progress. I thank Frostburg's faculty for its participation on the team responsible for shaping this budget plan. And I thank the faculty for their leadership on the committee charged with identifying departments and fellow faculty members for retrenchment. As difficult as these decisions were, they were made by the people with the greatest stake in them. This is shared governance in action.

It's during times of challenge that university policies must be followed faithfully and faultlessly. They were. It's during crises that communication with the university community must be frequent, transparent, and two-way. It's been all of those things. Still, I understand that fidelity to the process doesn't ease the pain of those affected by retrenchment. And I'm sorry.

The System has offered financial relief to Frostburg to minimize as much as possible the impact of cuts on the university's people. I meet monthly with Frostburg's leaders to monitor progress on budget objectives and outcomes. And this Board has been supportive of the university since being briefed last July on the plan to restore fiscal health.

And that *is* the plan: To restore fiscal health. In a shrinking higher ed landscape—with two dozen U.S. colleges closed this year alone and a projected 80 more by 2029—I want to be very clear that the System is supporting Frostburg expressly so that the university can regain full strength to serve its students, its region, and its state.

Frostburg is a model among anchor institutions, contributing enormously to the economy and the vitality of Western Maryland. That indispensable role—that very real value—is what we're protecting. Because Frostburg State is too important, to too many people, to do anything less.

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As we look ahead to 2025, I thank all of you for your uncompromising dedication to the students and the state we're so proud to serve. Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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