



Report to the Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

University of Maryland, College Park | April 17, 2026

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Before I turn to the good news of our universities, I extend my thanks to Dave Mosca, vice chancellor for accountability, who soon begins a well-earned retirement. That the USM has earned the trust of Maryland's leaders and citizens is a credit to Dave's insistence on nothing less than integrity, objectivity, and fairness in everything we do. Dave, we'll miss you.

ENDORISING OUR EXCELLENCE

I'll start today with some rankings, as *U.S. News* has just put out its list of the country's best graduate programs. There are far too many to name, so I'll highlight just a few.

At the University of Maryland, College Park, three dozen schools and programs were ranked in the U.S. top 25—among them, the schools of Engineering, Education, Public Policy, and Public Health. UMD's Student Counseling program took the No. 1 spot; Homeland Security, No. 3; Education Psychology, No. 7; Information Systems, No. 8.

The University of Baltimore's Clinical Law program is No. 4 in the nation; its Legal Writing program jumped 35 spots to No. 16. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Pharmacy was ranked a top 20 school. UMB's Maryland Carey Law has three specialties in the top 10. The School of Nursing earned top 10 placements for its master's in Nursing Leadership and its doctor of nursing practice in Gerontology.

Towson University's programs in Occupational Therapy, Audiology, and Speech-Language Pathology earned high rankings, as did Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The University of Maryland, Baltimore County shone in Computer Science, Clinical Psychology, Public Affairs, and Statistics.

Bowie State University's School of Education was ranked highly, as was Salisbury University's. Salisbury is also celebrating a *Fortune* magazine top 30 ranking for its MBA program—a landmark, first-time ranking and a credit to the Perdue School's rising prominence.

CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

While rankings endorse our excellence, I think our people offer far more compelling proof. Seven USM students won Goldwater Scholarships this year, one of the country's most prestigious

awards for undergraduates in the natural sciences, math, and engineering. College Park, Towson, and Salisbury have one recipient apiece: Joshua Mathew, Tyler Hannesson, and Rustin Newbold, respectively. UMBC has four: Phoenix Bryant, Deeya Mistry, Jessica Slaughter, and Amir Walton-Irvin.

UMBC Mechanical Engineering senior Caly Ferguson was just named to the National Society of Black Engineers' 25 Under 25 list. Caly is president of UMBC's NSBE chapter and, fittingly, a Goldwater Scholar *last* year.

At UMES, Isaiah Butler is already a veteran of international fellowships. And he's just won another—a Boren Award from the U.S. Department of Defense, allowing him to spend a year in Japan focusing on language and cultural immersion tied to national security priorities. UMES is also welcoming its first-ever exchange students to campus this year, part of a partnership with the University of Lorraine in France and proof of the university's commitment to expanding international education and critical language programs.

Maybe the only thing more exciting than seeing what our students achieve on their own is watching what they do together. In their debut performance, two engineering students at Frostburg State University, Saylor Miller and Bryce Snyder, finished No. 8 in a Lockheed Martin Ethics in Engineering case competition, facing students from some of the country's best-known schools and falling only narrowly to the competition's runner-up. The pair embraced their dark horse status and put Frostburg squarely on the map.

For the second year in a row, Architecture students at UMD made a clean sweep of the national concrete competition, clinching first-, second-, and third-place medals with their living-learning community designs. The winning proposal reimagines modular student housing using precast concrete.

A student team from UMES was named a finalist in NASA's Gateways to Blue Skies competition, requiring students to conceptualize novel advancements in commercial aviation maintenance to improve safety, efficiency, and industry costs. The team presents their findings next month at NASA Langley in Virginia.

I like to think our *faculty* have something to do with this surfeit of student excellence. Six USM faculty have been named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. College Park has five inductees: Dr. Edward Eisenstein, Dr. James Farquhar, Dr. Frauke Kreuter, Dr. Lawrence Sita, and Dr. Ian Spielman. UMBC has one, Dr. Anupam Joshi.

At Towson University, Chemistry professor Beth Kautzman was honored with one of NASA's highest team awards for exceptional scientific endeavors. Her team addresses North America's emerging research needs in urban air quality, atmospheric interactions, marine emissions, satellite observations, and climate change. UMGC's Najam Hassan is an NSF National AI Research Resource Education Fellow. One of just 25 scholars selected for the inaugural cohort, Hassan

helped launch Maryland's first-ever bachelor's degree in AI and now wants to bridge the gap between AI research and the classroom.

Researchers at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science have calculated what's called the "nutrient gap"—the space separating where manure is produced and where crops are grown—building a framework to identify opportunities to better capture and redistribute the substantial nitrogen resources already present in livestock systems. It offers a strategic roadmap for a more self-reliant and integrated American food system.

Researchers at UMD are teaming with colleagues at MIT in a DARPA-funded project to accelerate mathematical discovery by joining advanced AI with deep human expertise. The point is to develop AI systems that can reason strategically alongside human experts and address problems whose scale and complexity have long limited progress.

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE US

Last week, Chair Gooden and I were in Japan helping President Fowler and his team celebrate 70 years of the University of Maryland Global Campus in Asia. At the Tokyo commencement ceremony, we were able to talk with graduates for whom mission and sacrifice form the heart of their service, and it was an incredibly moving day.

UMGC keeps innovating how it serves these military learners, and part of that is accelerating their time-to-degree-completion. Four UMGc locations have just ranked among the nation's top 20 for the College Board's College-Level Examination Program. UMGc uses these no-cost exams to allow servicemembers to test out of the subjects they already know and earn credit for their military rank.

But our commitment to military-connected learners doesn't stop at UMGc. UMES, Salisbury, and Bowie State are among schools nationwide earning Military-Friendly status for their service to these students. Among small U.S. institutions, UBalt earns a top 10 Military-Friendly ranking. Among large institutions, Towson University does the same.

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

While U.S. servicemembers protect the foundations and ideals of our American democracy, it's our engagement as citizens that advances those very ideals.

The Civic Renewal Initiative at Towson University won *Insight Into Academia's* 2026 Civic Engagement and Community Service Award. Through the program, student fellows cultivate skills in restorative practices, dialogue, civic discourse, and community organizing, and lead the campus in an annual Community Conversation.

Meanwhile, student researchers at Towson have partnered with College Park's Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement and with the Maryland State Board of Elections to launch Go

Vote Maryland, an app giving voters easy access to accurate information ahead of the 2026 election cycle.

Towson was named a 2025–26 Voter Friendly Campus for its work in democratic engagement. Frostburg, UMES, and UMBC also earned the designation. Since its 2024 launch, the UMBC Poll has become the state’s go-to resource for gauging public opinion. It’s a signature program of the university’s Institute of Politics, which advances UMBC’s civic-focused mission to provide a regional base for local and national political analysis.

ENRICHING OUR COMMUNITIES

The entire point of civic education, ultimately, is community engagement—using our time and talent, our influence and assets, to strengthen our communities and partner with our neighbors in addressing the issues that challenge them the most.

And so we celebrate the state’s final approval of UMB’s West Lexington Corridor Project, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape not just the northern end of UMB’s campus but the communities it touches. The plan includes expansive housing, retail, entertainment, and athletic space open to all. President Jarrell was just voted into the *Baltimore Sun*’s Business and Civic Hall of Fame, and I know his bold vision for community development was one reason why.

UMCES just held a two-day retreat at its new Chesapeake Analytics Collaborative Building in Solomons, part of the university’s Global Collaboratory. UMCES scientists joined staff from more than half-a-dozen state agencies to prioritize potential fixes to sustainability and restoration problems, focusing on collaborative projects in water systems, land use, ecosystem health, and climate resilience where *existing* resources could yield big impacts.

With a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Towson will prepare K12 leaders to better serve autistic students, grounding educators and administrators in research-based practices that build cohesive teams and systems around autistic students and promote optimal outcomes.

UMGC just celebrated its 10th cohort of CyberTEACH, delivering intensive professional development in cybersecurity and digital literacy education to teachers across the DMV. Altogether, the program has graduated nearly 250 educators.

At Salisbury University, the Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship is forming an angel investing group to provide capital, mentorship, and industry connections to early-stage companies across sectors. The Mainsail Angel Network is the Perdue School’s latest initiative aimed at strengthening the Shore’s startup ecosystem and positioning Salisbury as a destination for entrepreneurial talent.

The Universities at Shady Grove is investing in its *own* entrepreneurs, expanding its makerspace into a network of interconnected assets—including a fabrication shop, electronics lab, open-

access studio, and innovation hall—all of them together supporting students in moving ideas from concept to creation.

OPENING OUR DOORS

I believe we engage our neighbors much more effectively when we open our doors wide to them.

UMGC was just honored by Montgomery County for its work to open access to sworn officers and professional staff within the county’s police department. It’s work that UMGC is expanding regionally. A new partnership with the Pennsylvania State Police maps academy training and field experience to college credit, accelerating degree completion among officers.

Southern Maryland is going all-in on growing its own workforce. The USM at Southern Maryland hosted a Leadership Southern Maryland forum, convening business, industry, government, and military partners in the work of strengthening local education pathways. And “growing your own” was exactly the point of the College of Southern Maryland’s Night of Engineering at USMSM, showing high school and community college students how to transfer smoothly into UMD’s Clark School of Engineering and how to navigate the career opportunities that kind of degree opens up.

Coppin State just hosted a two-day summit in LA—West Baltimore Meets the West Coast—introducing California students to the programs, careers, and *community* that HBCUs offer.

Bowie State is among 16 colleges selected for the Lumina Foundation’s From Campus to Career program, advancing career-connected, high-impact practices—like internships and paid employment, undergraduate research, service learning, and capstones—that strengthen students’ workforce outcomes. The project aligns with the university’s strategic focus on experiential learning and career readiness.

INVESTING IN OURSELVES

Of course, none of this work gets done without the resources to do it. And in a challenging state and federal landscape, our universities are investing themselves in their own long-term strength and agility.

UMB is making an unprecedented investment—up to \$33 million over two years—to support its research enterprise amid federal funding uncertainty. The money is already being deployed to stabilize at-risk programs, accelerate promising research, and strengthen infrastructure for long-term competitiveness.

Similarly, College Park is dedicating more than \$5 million to preserve key institutional capabilities, support at-risk faculty and junior scholars, and position UMD’s research enterprise for sustainable future growth.

Coppin State is advancing faculty excellence through its Faculty Success & Development Initiative, supporting 18 faculty members whose scholarship aligns with student outcomes and community impact, integrating research, teaching, and real-world results. The initiative supports faculty-led efforts in health equity, AI, education, environmental justice, and workforce development.

UMBC and UMB have just gotten confirmation of full funding for Year 4 of their multimillion-dollar NIH grant to support the recruitment and training of junior faculty and to promote inclusive excellence. The faculty members supported by the grant are pursuing interdisciplinary research in neuroscience, behavior, immunology, and metabolism.

Bowie State just got a huge endorsement of its BSU Bold priorities: Bowie's Campaign for Excellence raised nearly \$129 million, more than double the campaign's original goal. It marks the most significant fundraising milestone in university history.

The USM at Hagerstown held its inaugural pickleball tournament in partnership with local businesses to raise dollars for student scholarships. The Big Dill was a fun, community-engaged exercise in purpose-built philanthropy.

Giving Day at UMD raised a record-smashing \$9.4 million. Over 24 hours, nearly 10,000 people showed their love and loyalty to College Park, with donations outpacing last year's total by more than \$4 million.

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Monday ended Maryland's 2026 legislative session, and it was even more frenetic than usual. Altogether, 2,700+ bills were filed, with more than 300 affecting our System, our people, and our work.

But it wasn't the size of the legislative agenda that made this year an outlier; it was the *pace*. A huge number of bills passed out of their committees—and quickly—requiring an enormous amount of work in analysis, consultation, and advocacy. Key pieces of legislation, including several affecting the System, were still being debated last week, and 50-some bills went to conference committee just hours before *sine die*, meaning we used every minute of the session's 90 days.

The biggest headline for us is collective bargaining rights. One bill extends those rights to non-tenure-track faculty Systemwide, excluding UMGC, and another extends them to graduate assistants at College Park and UMBC.

The graduate assistant bill takes effect in July 2028, while the non-tenure-track bill is effective July 1 of this year, meaning our universities are already deep in the work of assessing the bill's scope and its impact on their people and operations. And given how different our universities are from one another, these impacts, campus to campus, will look very different as well.

Many of us were closely following the program approval bill, which would have extended to proposed undergraduate programs the process for objecting over concerns of duplication. That bill failed to pass, so the status quo stands, meaning the objection process applies only to proposed *graduate* programs.

I was particularly pleased with the passage of two bills that made it out of conference committee with just hours to go in the session. One of the bills, championed by Sen. Kevin Harris and Del. Edith Patterson, sets the stage for an Early College teacher pathway program in Southern Maryland and, more broadly, for the expansion of Early College opportunities for students statewide. The second bill, sponsored by Sen. Katie Fry Hester, establishes an AI Partnership at the System, serving as a central hub to guide and accelerate responsible AI use across state agencies, to help Maryland's small businesses adapt AI to their needs, and to grow our AI workforce. We're proud to be the convener for this important effort.

The FY27 budget passed out of the legislature in near-record time. Maryland entered the session with a \$1.4 billion deficit. We ended it with a budget that closes that gap and keeps the System more-or-less whole. Our leaders continue to invest in quantum, in our HBCUs, in our campus buildings and infrastructure, and in the faculty and staff responsible for our excellence. I appreciate the inclusion of a 1.5% COLA for employees, given that salaries still struggle to keep pace with inflation.

Leaders are also investing in our R&D: \$25 million in the budget helps us safeguard the System's research and research teams in the short term, while we execute a long-term strategy to diversify our funding portfolio, pivot programs to areas of federal priority, and strengthen the enterprise overall.

I'm grateful that Maryland leaders recognize the impact of the cuts we've suffered over the last two years and passed a budget allowing us to protect our priorities and our people.

And I'm grateful to my colleagues—many in the room this morning—who spent long days in Annapolis, advocating for our universities, our System, and our mission. I especially need to thank Vice Chancellor Susan Lawrence and her team at the System Office, together with the government relations teams at every single one of our universities. They worked incredibly hard for months—on a lot of coffee and little sleep. I'm indebted to you all.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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