

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

A REPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
AND THE STATE RELATIONS COUNCIL



Bowie State University

Coppin State University

Frostburg State University

Salisbury University

Towson University

University of Baltimore

University of Maryland, Baltimore

University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

University of Maryland
Center for Environmental Science

University of Maryland,
College Park

University of Maryland
Eastern Shore

University of Maryland
Global Campus

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A MESSAGE FROM CHANCELLOR JAY A. PERMAN

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

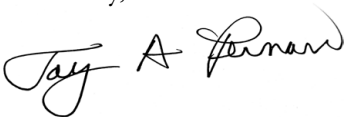
I write to you at the close of Maryland’s 2025 legislative session to thank you for your skill and your stamina, your energy and your advocacy. During a session that saw over 3,000 bills filed, we assessed the impact of nearly 250 that affect the System and offered testimony on more than 50 proposals influencing policy and budget issues important to our function and to our future.

As you well know, the session unfolded in the shadow of a massive state deficit. There are no good options when a budget shortfall approaches the one that Maryland faces in the coming fiscal year—and likely for years thereafter. One of a few things redeeming this difficult moment was seeing the collaboration, the solidarity, of our students, staff, faculty, and leaders as they spoke up for our common mission, our vital work, and our dedicated people.

I often extol the relationship we enjoy with our elected leaders. I share my gratitude for the trust they place in us to make Maryland stronger, wealthier, more equitable, and more just. This goodwill is especially important in times of challenge. So I thank you for nurturing our partnership with the legislature, for reminding our law-makers of the System’s value as an engine of Maryland prosperity and, as such, a key ally in building a strong, inclusive economy that benefits all.

I extend special thanks to Vice Chancellor Susan Lawrence and her team in Annapolis for guiding us through these last 90 days with grit, grace, and good humor. And I thank them for marshalling colleagues across the System who—year in and year out—perform small miracles amid the typical chaos of session, who persevere in telling the System’s story, and who fight for the policies and resources we need to meet our foundational goal: an accessible, affordable, and exceptional higher education for every Marylander who wants it.

Sincerely,



Jay A. Perman
Chancellor
University System of Maryland



FISCAL YEAR 2026 OPERATING BUDGET

The 447th Legislative Session marked the end of one of the most consequential 90 days in a generation. Significant projected general fund cash and structural budget shortfalls led to a challenging fiscal outlook as the 2025 session began. In December 2024, projected cash shortfalls totaled \$396 million for fiscal 2025 and \$2.95 billion for fiscal 2026, with structural shortfalls of \$1.07 billion and \$2.47 billion, respectively. The structural shortfall was projected to grow to \$6 billion by fiscal 2030. Sluggish economic growth, higher than expected entitlement costs, and a long-term commitment to enhancing K-12 education funding contributed to the fiscal challenges. The immediate challenge occurred despite revenue increases in the September and December 2024 estimates from the Board of Revenue Estimates (BRE) as expenses far exceeded expectations. Significant fiscal 2024 costs were rolled into fiscal 2025.

Growing concerns about the impact of federal government layoffs led BRE to reduce general fund revenue expectations in March 2025 for both fiscal 2025 and 2026. Worries about the potential impact of federal spending retrenchment on the Maryland economy intensified toward the end of session due to pauses in certain federal payments, cancellations of expected funding, and discussions of changes to federal support for various programs, most notably Medicaid. The Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) also faced financial challenges during the session due to a mismatch between available revenues and desired spending on capital priorities.

At a time of economic uncertainty, federal dysfunction, and rising consumer costs, accomplishing key objectives to promote the vitality and vibrancy of Maryland required honest and difficult conversations about the State’s fiscal responsibilities and adapting to new realities. The legislature approached the State’s budget deficit with a calculated mix of nearly \$2 billion in cuts and \$1.6 billion in revenue raising proposals, including slight changes to personal income taxes.

The overall budget is just over 1% higher than FY 2025 and resolves the \$3 billion structural deficit for FY 2026 and reduces the outyear FY 2027 deficit to \$155 million.

Together with the USM Presidents, one of the key responsibilities of the Office of the Chancellor is to prepare and advance the annual operating and capital budgets for our 12 distinguished institutions, and the three regional higher education centers that comprise the University System of Maryland (USM).

The USM will receive \$2.2 billion in state support. Funding specifically for the USM **decreases overall by \$163.4 million, or 6.9%**, compared to fiscal 2025. The fiscal 2026 budget also provides USM’s HBCUs—specifically, Bowie State University (BSU), the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), and Coppin State University (CSU)—a total of \$34.3 million in settlement funding, as mandated by Chapters 41 and 42 of 2021. Also included for USM is funding mandated by Chapter 683 of 2021 and Chapter 181 of 2024.

The General Assembly also added \$12.5 million in general funds and \$23 million in special funds to fund various programs and initiatives at USM institutions:

- \$10,000,000 in general funds provided for The University of Maryland, College Park for the purpose of providing funding to the University of Maryland Enterprise Corporation for Quantum; \$4,000,000 in special funds for The University of Maryland, College Park for the purpose of providing funding for the construction and capital equipping of the new interdisciplinary engineering building—Zupnik Hall; \$500,000 in general funds for The University of Maryland, College Park for the purpose of providing a grant to The Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. Center for Education, Justice and Ethics; \$100,000 in general funds for The University of Maryland, College Park for the purpose of providing a grant to the TerpsEXCEED Program.
- \$9,000,000 in special funds provided for Towson University to fund the construction and capital equipping of the demolition, renovation, and reconstruction of Smith Hall for the College of Fine Arts and Communication;

\$250,000 in general funds provided for Towson University for the purpose of providing funding for the Dr. Nancy Grasmick Leadership Institute; \$100,000 in general funds provided for Towson University for the purpose of providing funds for the StarTUp at the Armory.

- \$5,000,000 in special funds provided for The University of Maryland, Baltimore to fund the construction of a new School of Social Work building.
- \$5,000,000 in special funds provided for Salisbury University to fund the design, construction, and capital equipping of the Blackwell Hall renovation project.
- \$1,500,000 in general funds provided for The University of Baltimore for the purpose of providing funding to the Schaefer Center for Public Policy.

In addition, the allowance includes \$2.8 million to fund various initiatives:

\$1 million to CSU fund development program for the student services building; \$0.3 million to UMES to provide State matching funds for the agriculture extension program; \$1.5 million in legislative adjustments in the fiscal 2025 budget. The additional funding noted above is largely offset by decreased funding attributed to a \$155.5 million, or a 7%, reduction to the appropriation across institutions, a \$45 million reduction in fringe benefit expenses, and \$1.5 million less in BSU’s allocation of HBCU settlement funds.

State support for student financial aid increased by \$16.7 million, or 8.1%, to \$221.9 million in fiscal 2026. The largest needs-based aid program, the Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program, increased by \$9.4 million, totaling \$138.7 million in the fiscal 2026 allowance.



FISCAL YEAR 2026 **CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

The USM Capital Planning Office, in coordination with the debt financing expertise within the USM Office of the Comptroller, coordinates the development and approval of the annual capital budget and the 5- & 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Academic Revenue Bond activity. Planning Office staff guide the CIP request through an iterative cycle of development, review, approval, submission, and funding with institutional presidents, the Regents, the Governor’s budget departments, and the budget committees of the General Assembly.

At the USM, “access for all” means far more than getting these learners into our universities. It means giving them everything they need to succeed once they’re there. And that requires sustained investment in the environments that nurture their success: classrooms that make it easier to learn and teach and collaborate; labs that facilitate world-class research and innovation; communal spaces where students can connect with one another and knit together a community of support – a community of ideas. Legislative support for the USM’s capital program makes all of this possible.

In addition, the state’s growth agenda includes industries fueled by the University System’s graduates and research. Policymakers have called for investments in IT, life sciences, and aerospace and defense – industries well-acquainted with the quality of a degree from an institution within the USM. The governor and the legislature want to ensure that these industries powering the “economy of tomorrow” are housed right here in Maryland. Those aspirations are advanced by USM institutions whose state-of-the-art facilities are equipped to foster innovation in these critical sectors and to cultivate the innovators who will lead them.

With a commitment of over \$290 million in fiscal year 2026, the General Assembly approved several USM projects included in the Governor’s Capital Budget – \$36.6 million above the FY 2025 level – making the final action a major win for the USM. This year’s capital budget made critical additions to the CIP while accelerating several other projects. Actions taken by the General Assembly related to the Capital Budget under [House Bill 351](#) and [House Bill 793](#) (*Academic Facilities Bonding Authority*) were divided into three parts. All of these are detailed in the Capital Budget “Scorecard” produced by the USM ([see appendix page 36](#)).

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS – BY CAMPUS

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE

New School of Social Work Building: \$42.924 million for planning and construction. \$5 million of this total will come from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Paygo), replacing an equal amount of GO Bonds in the total.

PROJECT SUMMARY: This project involves the construction of a new School of Social Work building. Originally, this project was intended to renovate the School of Social Work East and West buildings that were constructed in 1932 and 1983, respectively, and build an addition. However, a facility condition assessment revealed that renovation of the current facilities would not be cost effective and new construction was necessary.

Funding has been accelerated to complete the facility by August 2027 for the fall semester cohort. The total estimated cost of the project has increased due to the addition of energy efficiency enhancements that will make it a net zero facility. These enhancements include a \$1.6 million geothermal exchange system, a \$1.5 million high-performance envelope upgrade, and a \$0.5 million photovoltaic system installation. These measures are expected to improve the energy efficiency of the building by approximately 48%.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK (UMCP)

Campuswide Building Systems and Infrastructure Improvements: \$12.5 million for Construction (including \$5 million in Academic Revenue Bond Funds)

PROJECT SUMMARY: This is a stand-alone facility renewal initiative to address critical deferred maintenance projects, which, if left unaddressed, pose serious health, life, and safety issues. The program addresses a variety of renewal projects in two categories: **Building Systems** (replacing electrical gear, upgrading fire alarm, sprinkler, and pump controls, replacing HVAC equipment), and **Infrastructure Improvements** (replacing underground heating and cooling piping, repairing building foundations, replacing underground drain and sanitary piping, replacing exterior security lighting/cameras, repairing roads and storm drain outfall and ponds.

Infrastructure failures have caused disruptions in electricity and HVAC services; caused water damage to buildings, resulting in classes being canceled, relocated to another building, or suspended; and have resulted in lost research. When failures occur, they often require custom fabrication due to the age of the systems, which increases the length of service disruption and repair costs.

Zupnik Hall, Interdisciplinary Engineering Building: \$58.7 million for construction and equipment. \$4 million of this total will come from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Paygo), replacing an equal amount of GO Bonds in the total.

In October 2017, UMCP announced its largest donation of \$219.5 million from the A. James and Alice B. Clark Foundation, which included a provision to provide 30% or \$55 million (the lesser of the two) to support the construction of a new building for the A. James Clark School of Engineering that is to be leveraged with State and institutional funds. The new facility will house elements of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Department of Mechanical Engineering and include space for collaboration with institutional and industrial partners, including the Center for Advanced Transportation Technology. The new facility will address lack of space to accommodate projected growth and insufficient modern facilities for the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

Construction commenced January 2021 and is expected to be completed June 2026. The project will achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System – Silver rating and include a wastewater recovery plant, energy-efficient mechanical equipment, water-saving plumbing fixtures, the selection of a building material with a low environmental impact, and provisions for a photovoltaic array. In addition, the facility will include a thermal plant to support the goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions not only for this facility but also the new Chemistry Wing.

Graduate Student Housing Subsidy: \$5 million for construction

PROJECT SUMMARY: The Graduate Student Housing Subsidy continues the development of a 10.75-acre site in east campus to make it more financially feasible for a developer to build below-market rate graduate student housing and will also create housing for faculty and staff. The project includes demolishing old housing and offices, relocating existing utilities, converting a vacated portion of the Ellicott Dining Hall into offices for the Department of Residential Facilities, and performing site improvement work. Additionally, this project will address the shortage of affordable housing for graduate students.

A survey of graduate students found that one-third of single graduate students and 41% of students with families had trouble finding housing close to campus, resulting in many students having to commute to campus, with 37% having a commute of at least 25 minutes. A 2020 housing study found that there was unmet demand for over 800 graduate student beds.

Health and Human Sciences Complex: Shell Space Fit-Out & Renovation: \$5 million

PROJECT SUMMARY: This project will complete recently constructed shell space in the New Cole Field House and renovate two floors in the original Cole Field House South Wing to create the Health and Human Sciences complex. The complex will house the researched focused units of the School of Public Health, the Department of Kinesiology, the Center for Health Families, and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. The

complex will provide research and clinical space, increasing the ability to secure sponsored research funding. It will also provide space for the Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (AIE).

The School of Public Health is currently housed in a facility that was a recreational and physical education building that was built between 1973 and 1978. Overall, the facility is functionally inadequate and lacks room for growth.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY (BSU)

New Thurgood Marshall Library and Academic Commons: \$2.23 million for planning

The new Library and Academic Commons at Bowie State University will replace the current Thurgood Marshall Library, which was built in 1977. The proposed 185,000 GSF facility will address the university’s need for a modern, comprehensive library that enhances student and faculty research and learning opportunities.

The new building will be next to Henry Circle, between the Center for Business and Graduate Studies and the newly completed Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. It becomes a physical and visual link between residential and commuter students with a gateway to the MARC train station. It will provide a collaborative and student-focused environment and be flexible and adaptable to respond to the ever-evolving demands of educational technology. The synergy created among these three buildings will help to provide a dynamic and welcoming hub of campus activity.

TOWSON UNIVERSITY (TU)

Smith Hall Renovation and Reconstruction: \$71.1 million for construction and equipment

(\$62,102,000 in GO bonds and \$9,000,000 in special funds from the SEIF to fund the construction and capital equipping of the demolition, renovation, and reconstruction of Smith Hall for the College of Fine Arts and Communication)

PROJECT SUMMARY: This project will demolish and reconstruct a new east wing and renovate the west wing of Smith Hall, the former science building, and consolidate the three departments (Mass Communications, Communication Studies, and Electronic Media and Film) of the College of Fine Arts and Communication into one building, due to departments currently being dispersed across campus.

Since the College of Science and Mathematics, formerly in Smith Hall, relocated to the College of Health Professions (a new science facility), 60% of Smith Hall’s obsolete science laboratories did not have a usable purpose. The project will modernize the technology-based and scalable, study, media production, office, and class spaces. This renovation and reconstruction will replace the inadequate building systems (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and fire suppression) in Smith Hall to decrease TU’s deferred maintenance. Also, this facility will decrease the campuswide space deficit for office, study, instructional, and other academic support spaces. As of December 2024, the east wing has been demolished and is currently being rebuilt.

An analysis confirmed that a complete renovation of Smith Hall was the best option; however, the program verification and conceptual design phases determined that modifying the project scope to demolish and reconstruct the east wing would be the most cost effective and timely solution to increase the ceiling height and number of media and class laboratories needed for the specialized technology and equipment for the prospective programs. In September 2024, the state Department of Budget Management approved a revision of the project scope to implement a new geothermal well field to accommodate up to 90% of the facility’s cooling and heating electrical loads, to make the project in-line with the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA) of 2022.

There is an additional cost estimate of \$9.4 million for the green building premium that is attributed to carbon reduction and the CSNA. Since the former Smith Hall building used a large amount of energy, the uninsulated masonry exterior will be replaced with a highly efficient modern rainscreen that will significantly reduce energy consumption. A geothermal well field and a water-source, heat pump-based HVAC system will be implemented to reduce electricity consumption by about 85% to 90% for building heating and cooling. The Smith Hall project is designed to utilize the photovoltaic power generation process (converting energy from the sun into

electricity using solar panels). The new renovated and reconstructed Smith Hall will be an all-electric building with a net zero ready strategy to decrease fossil fuel energy production, with a goal to earn a LEED—Gold certification. The Inflation Reduction Act federal tax credits could partially reimburse this geothermal system.

Cook Library Facilities Renewal and HVAC Replacement: \$300,000 for planning, construction, and equipment.

PROJECT SUMMARY: \$300,000 to provide funds to design, construct, and equip facility renewal renovations, including HVAC replacement.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE (UMES)

New Residence Hall: \$1 million for planning

PROJECT SUMMARY: Funding provides for preliminary design to assist with predevelopment activities for a new residence hall.

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU)

Baseball Complex Infrastructure Improvements: \$1 million for planning, construction, and equipment

PROJECT SUMMARY: Funding provides for the design, construction, and capital equipment infrastructure improvements to the Frostburg State University Baseball Complex—including a fully artificial turf baseball field.

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY (SU)

Blackwell Hall Renovation: \$35.011 million for construction and equipment. \$5 million of this total will come from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Paygo), replacing an equal amount of GO Bonds in the total.

PROJECT SUMMARY: Blackwell Hall was the former library, and this project will renovate and construct an addition to the existing building. The student services departments (registrar, financial aid, academic advising, career services, bursar, admissions, counseling center, disabilities resource center, office of the dean of students, and testing center) will move from different areas of SU’s campus into one building, the renovated Blackwell Hall, to become the new Student Services Center. The addition will be two stories and constructed on the northwest corner of the building. This will be the new entrance for the building with reception, waiting, and additional office spaces to become the new Welcome Center for SU.

Currently, the student services departments are spread across campus in five different buildings. This causes an inconvenience for students, families, and staff in the student services departments to manage their affairs. Once these departments move into Blackwell Hall, the spaces that they were formerly located in will become available for SU to convert into additional much-needed classroom, laboratory, office, and study spaces.

The project will also replace the outdated mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems to make the structure compliant with current codes to increase building performance standards, and the building will feature new elevators and restrooms. This project will accommodate the growth of SU to potentially increase the enrollment. Additional meeting, storage, and office spaces will be provided in the renovated building.

The project includes sustainability components to address carbon reduction goals and the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA). This project is implementing a high-performance building envelope and a geothermal well field to reduce electricity consumption for the building’s heating and cooling. The Blackwell Hall project is designed to utilize the photovoltaic power generation process (converting energy from the sun into electricity using solar panels). These initiatives will make the facility net zero ready to decrease fossil fuel energy production with a goal to earn a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System—Gold certification. The State is funding the geothermal energy initiative and could partially be reimbursed by the Inflation Reduction Act federal tax credits.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY (UMBC)

Sherman Hall Renovation: \$21.211 million for construction and equipment

PROJECT SUMMARY: This project will renovate the 44-year-old Sherman Hall, which houses several academic departments, with the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences; and the School of Social Work. It also currently holds enrollment management and undergraduate academic affairs. The project includes restoration of the building envelope; correcting barriers to accessibility; and replacing and updating the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and life safety systems. Renovations will be implemented in phases while the building remains fully occupied.

The prefabricated brick panel façade is failing. It was determined that the prefabricated brick panel system cannot be repaired, and removal and replacement is the only option. UMBC replaced 33 of the building’s 78 panels that showed signs of failure with metal cladding. The mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems have exceeded their useful life and require frequent servicing and replacement of components. There has been repeated interior damage due to leaks of the domestic water piping and sprinkler systems. In addition, the fire alarms are no longer supported by the vendors.

New Student Services Building: \$5 million for planning

The project will construct a new one-stop student services building that will house various student support services, including admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, student business services, student disability services, and other academic success services. These offices are currently located in eight buildings around campus, making it difficult for students to navigate available services and resources. The building will be centrally located on campus, making services more accessible to students.

Stadium Synthetic Running Track Surface: \$530,000 for planning, construction, and equipment



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND OFFICE (USMO)

Colwell Center Deferred Maintenance Project: \$7.1 million for construction and equipment

This project was added to the 2023 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) due to the deterioration of the 29-year-old tension fabric roof. The project also includes critical HVAC and related mechanical improvements needed in the facility. While the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) manages and maintains this facility, it is not part of its facilities inventory because it is a “systemwide” facility and therefore became a request from the University System of Maryland Office (USMO).

The Colwell Center (formerly the Columbus Center) houses the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology; the Chancellor’s headquarters; Towson’s University Center for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Excellence; and leased space to private entities.

The maintenance project will be completed in two phases:

- Phase I of the project will replace the existing tension fabric roof that is 30 years old and at the end of its useful life. An inspection conducted in March 2022 indicated that the roof is deteriorating. The roof encloses a portion of the interior, and any failure would directly expose the interior to the weather, which would cause significant damage and lead to an immediate cessation of operations.
- Phase II of the project will refurbish the existing central plant system that is also 30 years old. Replacement parts are not readily available, and the system is not energy efficient. The refurbishment will replace obsolete chillers, controls, motors, and pumps and includes the demolition of ice storage units.

Systemwide Facilities Renewal Program: \$25 million for planning, construction and equipment

The University System of Maryland (USM) annually surveys its institutions to assess the size and magnitude of the system’s deferred maintenance and facilities renewal needs. The survey instrument has been revised in recent years to measure the backlog more precisely. Currently, institutions categorize deferred maintenance cost as either structural/envelope, mechanical/electrical systems, or life safety/regulatory. In addition, institutions report on costs associated with programmatic improvements which include renovations, remodeling, reconfiguration, modernization, and information technology/communications.

Academic Revenue Bonds

The USM manages the debt issuance for each of the twelve member institutions, three regional higher education centers, and central office through a single, System-wide Revenue Bond program that provides funding for both state-supported academic projects, but also the capital needs of self-supporting activities like dorms, dining halls and athletics. Thorough strategic planning and financially responsible management has enabled the USM to maintain a Aa1/AA+ bond rating, which provides for bonds to be sold at a premium, with low interest rates, to finance all necessary projects without straining the USM’s debt capacity.

House Bill 793 -

University System of Maryland - Academic Facilities Bonding Authority

Authorizes the use of \$25 million in academic facilities bonds for the purpose of financing construction, renovation, and renewal projects at USM buildings. Similar legislation has been approved each year for the past 2 decades. *Specifically*, the bill authorizes \$5 million in academic facilities bonds for an infrastructure project at the University of Maryland, College Park Campus and an additional \$25 million for facilities renewal on buildings across the system.

CAPITAL BUDGET APPENDIX: SEE PAGE 36

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS IN THE JOINT CHAIRMEN’S REPORT

Report on Fiscal 2026 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Settlement Funds: The committees remain interested in the HBCU settlement funds. The committees request that Bowie State University (BSU), Coppin State University (CSU), Morgan State University (MSU), and University Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) each submit a report on the plans for the fiscal 2026 HBCU settlement funds. The reports should include how the fiscal 2026 funding will be used for scholarships and financial aid support services, faculty recruitment and development, expanding and improving existing academic programs, developing and implementing new academic programs, academic support, and marketing at each institution.

Information Request
Report on fiscal 2026 HBCU settlement funds
Author BSU CSU MSU UMES
Due Date November 1, 2025

COMMITTEE NARRATIVE

At times, the budget committees wish to express legislative intent or request USM to perform certain studies or report on particular issues during the interim. This is usually written as “committee narrative” in the Joint Chairmen’s report of the budget committees’ action. Committee narrative does not have the effect of law nor does it require agreement to the language on the part of the entire House and Senate. However, both budget committees must agree on the wording. Several items fall under the title of “Committee Narrative” providing the intent of the General Assembly that USM performs certain actions in the form of reports or studies into relevant issues. The subcommittee included the following items as Committee Narrative.

Institutional Faculty Workload Report: The committees request that the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University (MSU), and St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM) continue to provide annual instructional workload reports for tenured/tenure-track faculty. By focusing on these faculty, the committees gain a sense of the teaching activities for the regular core faculty. However, there are other types of instructional faculty at institutions such as full- and part-time nontenured/nontenure-track faculty, including adjunct faculty, instructors, and lecturers. Focusing on only tenured/tenure-track faculty provides an incomplete picture of how students are taught. Therefore, the report should also include the instructional workload when all types of faculty are considered. Additional information may be included at the institution’s discretion. Furthermore, the USM report should include the percent of faculty meeting or exceeding teaching standards for tenured/tenure-track faculty for the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus.

Information Request
Annual report on faculty workload
Author USM, MSU, SMCM
Due Date December 15, 2025

National Marketing Campaign: The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) undertook an expansive national campaign to expand its reach, spending approximately \$326 million from fiscal 2020 to 2025. The committees are interested in the results of this multimillion dollar campaign. The committees request that UMGC submit a report by December 1, 2025, detailing the amount spent in each fiscal year, as well as the number and dollar value of each media contract used, and the students gained from each contract. The report should also include the metrics on how the institution determined the enrollment gains from the campaign. UMGC should address the details of any planned or implemented new marketing campaigns not related to the initial \$500 million campaign.

Information Request
National marketing campaign
Author UMGC
Due Date December 1, 2025



FINAL STATUS OF BILLS:

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In a Legislative Session that saw over 3,000 bills filed, the USM Office of Government Relations assessed the impact of nearly 250 individual bills that would have had varying impacts on the system, its faculty, staff and students. Working closely with the USM State Relations Council and often with our colleagues across all sectors of education, USM succeeded in holding over two dozen bills from passage that would have imposed additional administrative, regulatory or fiscal impact on the USM at a time when our operating budget has been reduced. At the same time, USM showed support for legislation addressing critical needs on campus. From services and support for pregnant and parenting students, to high-impact economic development activities to accessibility, accommodations and affordability proposals, the USM testified in-person frequently while submitting nearly 50 pieces of written testimony to House and Senate committees.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

HB 86 (SB 435)

Institutions of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools – Title VI Coordinators

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 86 would have required institutions of higher education, including those of the University System of Maryland (USM), to designate a coordinator to ensure compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Specifically, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

All USM Institutions have implemented policies and processes that are in accordance with Title VI. USM Institutions have a standardized process for handling Title VI complaints, with these procedures being guided by non-discrimination policies and related procedures. In a few cases, Title VI complaints are handled by the Title VI Coordinator. While at other institutions those responsibilities may fall to the Assistant Vice President for Equity and Civil Rights; fair practices officers; Assistant Vice President for Student Success and when involving employees, the Chief Human Resources Officers.

HB 298

Maryland Higher Education Commission – Demographic Data Collection – Parental Status

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 298 would have required the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to develop questions, in consultation with each public institution of higher education, and collect data on the parental status of enrolled students.

Student parents, also called “parenting students”, are individuals who are enrolled in an educational degree or certificate program and who have at least one child or dependent. They represent nearly one in five undergraduate students who are parenting while pursuing higher education. Moreover, commonly relied on national data sources (as well as institution-level data collection) likely do not capture all the students caring for children or dependents in classrooms and campuses across the country.

Without an accurate representation and understanding of the undergraduate student-parent population, stakeholders may be unable to design and implement the necessary supports for student-parent success. House Bill 298 would have given the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) the ability to draft regulations that get at some of these important questions. Data collection is necessary to better understand student-parents’ experiences pursuing higher education, their academic progress, their retention and graduation rates, and their utilization of campus support services.



HB 458 (SB 603)

University of Maryland, College Park Campus - TerpsEXCEED Program - Funding

USM Position: Support
Status: Passed

The TerpsEXCEED (EXperiencing College through Education and Employment Discovery) Program is an inclusive post-secondary education program at the University of Maryland, College Park Campus that provides Maryland students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in a college experience for two years culminating in a certificate. The bill authorizes the Governor to include \$350,000 in the annual budget bill for the TerpsEXCEED Program. The funding is permitted to be used for various services provided to students with intellectual disabilities, including advising and counseling, offering courses, and developing internship and job opportunities.



HB 495

Education – Antidiscrimination Policies – Policy and Notice Requirements

USM Position: Unfavorable
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 495 would have required that schools, including USM institutions, display anti-discrimination policies prominently on a website within three clicks of a computer mouse. This legislation attempted to create a uniform institutional approach regarding the type of information that should be included in a school’s anti-discrimination policy, obligations regarding publicizing anti-discrimination policies, and appropriate notifications, as well as training for discrimination prevention.

The USM Board of Regents (BOR) Policy on Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity requires that USM not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of protected characteristics, or any other basis prohibited by federal law, the State of Maryland, or other applicable laws. This policy, like all policies at each USM institution, covers all programs, services, policies, activities, and procedures of the university, including participation in education programs and employment. Notwithstanding the above, this policy does not

address discrimination on the basis of sex or gender-related conduct covered by the USM’s Policy on Sex Discrimination which was updated as recently as July.

Information about discrimination and equal opportunity policies is provided in student handbooks, faculty handbooks, employee handbooks, and in sample syllabi template language provided to faculty each academic year. Non-discrimination policies are shared liberally using a variety of strategies and outlets.

House Bill 495 called for a singular antidiscrimination policy, however, policies and procedures regarding sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking are generally included in policies and procedures that fulfill the requirements of Title IX. Separate policies and procedures address discrimination on protected classes.

The training requirements were specific and would have required ongoing dedicated personnel and training materials. Posting physical copies of anti-discrimination policies on edifices across campus isn’t as much a logistical question, as it is a question of “why” and to what functional effect. Moreover, the definition of anti-discrimination policy does not make mention of “discrimination.” Bullying and harassment, based upon a protected category, are forms of discrimination but not all encompassing.



HB 531

Education – Remote Learning Accommodations – Established (College Disability Education Act)

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 531 would have required “*all public institutions of higher education to establish remote learning accommodations for students with disabilities that impede regular, in-person attendance beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year,*” and would have authorized the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to issue waivers from the requirement.

Disabilities can vary widely; some might be easily recognizable while many are invisible. USM celebrates each student and recognizes the distinct attributes and strengths woven into our community. USM recognizes also that remote learning options offer students with disabilities increased flexibility, allowing individuals to learn at their own pace, manage their specific needs, access educational materials in accessible formats, and often eliminate physical barriers that might prevent them from attending traditional in-person classes, promoting greater independence and inclusion in education.

House Bill 531 would have directly impacted campus disability services staff and the process by which remote learning disability accommodations are developed. The fiscal impact of House Bill 531 would have been felt widely across the USM. One estimated fiscal impact to a campus was over \$10 million—with upfront costs of \$7 million to upgrade the software and hardware technology of relevant classrooms, including the enhanced real-time closed captioning for any live-streamed course to meet compliance standards. Additionally, staffing would also be required to manage an increased volume of real-time captioning requests.

Program and accreditation requirements may not allow for remote options and such a change could have major financial implications for the USM institutions. Each academic program has different academic and accreditation requirements, objectives, and milestones. If a course is even eligible for remote learning, those determinations would be applied on a case-by-case basis, depending on the type of course (laboratory research, didactic, simulation, research

courses, seminar, workshop, clinical rotations, field work, internship, etc.). Some accreditors may not allow virtual learning for its program or type of course and may impact the technical standards of programs.

In addition, many of USM’s professional students take board or licensure exams and remote learning could potentially impact their eligibility for these exams. Recording policies, technology, and accessibility varies per school and is changing every year. Some campuses may not have livestream capabilities and bandwidth in some cases where accommodation is demanded. The current educational support and disability services functions would need to change, as well as the provision of faculty training, support, and preparation to teach livestream/virtual/hybrid/in person as required.

HB 552

Higher Education – Drug Detection Products – Distribution and Report

USM Position: Favorable with Amendment
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 552 would have required each institution of higher education to provide, at no charge to students, drug detection products. A “drug detection product” is defined as a “...disposable test product that allows an individual to test a drug for the presence of fentanyl...” and it is to be made available in “... student health centers, libraries, and bathrooms.”

USM campuses deploy “wraparound” strategies to prevent an opioid overdose from occurring on campus in the first place. Institutions routinely collect information regarding student engagement and connectedness, and two evidence-based protective factors against substance use in college-age populations. The attitudes and beliefs of faculty and students as it relates to substance abuse disorder are as important as the availability of a detection product.

Several USM institutions participate in the Overdose Response Program sponsored by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The program authorizes certain individuals (through the issuance of a certificate) to administer naloxone to an individual experiencing, or believed to be experiencing, opioid overdose to help prevent a fatality when medical services are not immediately available.

HB 611 (SB 713)

Institutions of Higher Education – Mandatory Disclosures for New and Prospective Students (Informed Enrollment Act)

USM Position: Favorable with Amendment
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 611 would have required each institution of higher education to publicize College Scorecard information on its website and in certain publications, as well as to share this information with current and prospective students in several prescribed ways.

This bill largely aligned with practices of USM institutions and the efforts to make prospective and current students aware of what their institutions offer in the way of programs, what their programs cost, what kind of outcomes students can expect, and what typical student debt is for those leaving the institution.

Currently, the College Scorecard of the US Department of Education aggregates in the Scorecard information the institutions provide through collections to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), as well as data it has through the Department’s National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

If the College Scorecard remains as it is in its current form, institutions could have complied with the proposed legislation in time, but the July 1, 2025, implementation date had both logistical and financial problems with respect to updating all “related recruitment materials.” The bill called for not only publicizing a link but also an explanation of what is at the link, which would require the re-design and reprinting of certain materials.

While the bill anticipated the possibility of data not being available through the Department of Education, it did not account for the possibility that the Department could change the Scorecard so that its content might no longer be aligned with the goals of the proposed legislation. The bill had requirements for “when” and “how” information will be shared. The USM institutions share this information routinely, but how, when, and where they share it may vary from one group of people to another in order to tailor the message to the moment.

HB 688 (SB 552)

Education – High School Graduation Requirements – Financial Aid Application

USM Position: Favorable
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 688 would have required Maryland high school students to complete a FAFSA or the State’s application for financial assistance, or receive a waiver, to graduate.

In FY 2024, 80% of USM students were Maryland residents, and the USM awarded over \$100 million in need-based institutional aid to these students. This aid was in addition to State need-based aid students may have received. Students may also have received merit aid that includes a preference for student financial need. The key to identifying who is eligible for need-based aid is a student’s FAFSA or, for those who cannot complete a FAFSA, the MHEC One-App, which now has the State financial aid application. Every year, USM institutions conduct extensive outreach to ensure the applicants complete one of these two applications, and over the past year, those efforts were dramatically ramped up to offset FAFSA problems.

Requiring students to apply for financial assistance can expedite and potentially facilitate families’ financial planning for postsecondary education, especially for those who may not have otherwise had exposure to the application. With knowledge of aid that may be available, it is possible that more students would become interested in education after high school.



HB 762

Maryland Higher Education Commission – Higher Education Goals – Revisions

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 762 identified key State goals for postsecondary education to help align higher education with economic development goals to serve the State and its citizens. The USM offered friendly amendments to re-focus the intent of the bill and incorporate a degree-attainment goal back into the original plan. Generally, there are already processes in place for MHEC to follow with respect to forming a new policy. The goals in House Bill 762 seemed problematic.

Since 2013, the State has been pursuing the goal of 55% of Marylanders having a degree by 2025. Institutions of higher education have exceeded their annual goals to help reach that marker, but in- and out-of-state migration means the State is just shy of that goal. Nonetheless, Maryland’s economic strength is clearly tied to the relatively high level of education that its workforce possesses. Having a State degree goal has been important to Maryland and will remain so. The number of degrees USM awards climbed 15% over the past decade – to 42,200+ last year. And 80% of USM undergraduates are Maryland residents. That means many of them stay in Maryland following graduation, contributing their wealth to our economy and their service to our communities.

Access and affordability to put a college education within the reach of any Marylander who wants one is



USM’s most essential mission. But we also understand there are some jobs that require post-secondary education but not necessarily a bachelor’s degree. When we look at education completion including certificates, Maryland educational attainment continues to fare well against competitor states. It makes sense for Maryland to track this metric as well, so long as we do not lose sight of the importance of baccalaureate and graduate degrees in an innovation economy. We therefore recommended adding amendments that would have explicitly called out a degree goal as well as having a goal about credentials of value.

Additionally, the USM is fully committed to a robust research agenda and partners willingly with the State in many arenas. Just last year, USM venture support helped launch 182 Maryland startups – 9,000 people working for 200 companies, bringing to market innovations that improve our health, protect the environment, keep Marylanders safe, and connect our world. The combined R&D expenditures of USM’s two biggest research universities – the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland, Baltimore – rank them 11th among all U.S. public universities. Altogether, the USM expended \$1.6 billion last year in research and sponsored programs, up 29% in the past five years. The USM ranks 15th among the country’s academic institutions in U.S. utility patents issued. USM had concerns about having a state research goal when critical research is driven by federal priorities. Having such a goal implied reporting and more administrative work, which might disincentivize faculty research rather than attract it.

[HB 774](#)

Higher Education – Hunger- Free Campus Grant Program – Alterations

USM Position: Favorable
Status: Passed

House Bill 774 requires the Governor, beginning in FY 2027, to allocate grant funding to any 4-year or 2-year public institutions of higher education or regional center to address hunger and food insecurity on campus. In return, each eligible institution pledges a matching contribution to be used to implement the goals of the program, including \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contribution. College campuses across the nation have seen increased numbers of students experiencing hunger or housing insecurity.

All USM institutions have programs addressing food insecurity including food pantries, emergency funds, and other programs to help students meet their most basic needs. House Bill 774 will help enhance the institutions’ efforts to mitigate the heightened prevalence of hunger on campus, and the detrimental outcomes associated with students not having a secure source of food.

Programs such as Retriever Essentials at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, the Hawk Shares program at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, or Food for the Flock at Salisbury University are just a few examples of holistic programs at USM institutions that leverage resources to raise awareness around hunger on campus. Moreover, food insecurity is a predictor of persistence and retention and should be a concern for universities, especially those serving large numbers of students in higher-risk populations. Being able to meet those students’ needs will help increase their opportunities for success at USM institutions and beyond.

[HB 840 \(SB 511\)](#)

Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Plan Requirements (Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act)

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Passed

House Bill 840 requires USM institutions (with the exception of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies, the University of Maryland Global Campus, and the University of Baltimore) to adopt a plan regarding pregnant and parenting students that is consistent with Title IX of the federal Higher Education Act. The plan must include (1) referral to on-campus or off-campus services regarding the availability of or eligibility for government assistance programs; (2) provision of information about or referral to adoption services; (3) availability of institutional accommodations, as specified; and (4) a referral network of health care service providers. By August 1, 2026, each affected institution must post the plan on its website. The bill takes effect July 1, 2025

Equal treatment and support for pregnant and parenting students is critical to ensuring that all female students have equal access to educational opportunities. The campuses that comprise the USM have consistently implemented timely policies to keep these students in school, ensure their children’s health – and in the end get their diploma. While House Bill 840 supported this goal, we believed these resources should be posted online rather than in a policy because this information frequently changes.

Academic accommodation is generally made on a case-by-case basis as it pertains to the physical circumstances of pregnancy and any related medical conditions. This is a distinct time period that may include: the duration of the student’s pregnancy, physical recovery and/or post pregnancy medical or psychological conditions that would be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Based on Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1927, USM institutions must give all students who might be, are, or have been pregnant (whether currently parenting or not) equal access to school programs and extracurricular activities. Schools must treat pregnant and parenting students in the same way that they treat other students who are similarly

able or unable to participate in school activities. And Title IX requires schools to prevent and address sex-based harassment, which includes harassment based on pregnancy. Pregnant and/or parenting students may not be prevented from attending class on the basis of pregnancy. Separate programs or schools for pregnant and parenting students must be completely voluntary and must offer opportunities equal to those offered for non-pregnant students.

[HB 912](#)

Institutions of Higher Education – Instructor Training – Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 912 would have required institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide instructors with training on the institution’s obligations as it relates to students with disabilities and the federal laws of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The USM does not currently have, nor have campuses budgeted for, the level of broadly mandated training and instruction that was called for in House Bill 912. Among the primary concerns in House Bill 912 was the efficacy and appropriateness of faculty being trained to determine accommodations based on a student’s disability using a yet-to-be “model training program” developed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). The USM institutions take seriously any considerations that may impact students’ current HIPPA and medical confidentiality protections. On each campus, a training program of this scope would require a sizeable and significant multi-department collaboration among disability services, academic affairs, faculty senate, instructional technology/DoIT offices, and university counsel.

Faculty are encouraged to work alongside students and familiarize themselves with programs and staff that manage disability accommodation requests and implementation. Once students have been approved for accommodations by the respective disability services office, they can generate accommodation letters or notices for faculty, and review accommodation

letters together in order to determine the best way to implement accommodations in each class. The offices of disability services at USM institutions are well-equipped and properly trained to connect students with disabilities to the services they deserve and expect.

House Bill 912 presented practical and logistical challenges. In addition to required faculty tutorial training on ADA/504 accommodations, the training would have had to align with recent regulatory changes pertaining to digital accessibility, inclusive teaching practices, and the use of digital tools and course materials.

The USM agreed with House Bill 912 in principle, but there was concern about the requirement that training be completed by all instructors by October 2026. Most faculty wouldn’t have been available during the summer, which meant trainings would have had to been offered in August – September which is an extremely busy time for faculty and the limited summer staff.



[HB 1462 \(SB 847\)](#)

Higher Education – Antihate and Antidiscrimination Policies and Workgroup (Maryland Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students Act)

USM Position: Letter of Information

Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 1462 would have required higher education institutions to adopt and enforce policies regarding anti-hate and anti-discrimination and time, place, and manner requirements for expressive conduct; required higher education institutions to conduct meetings with certain approved student organizations; establish a Campus Community Grant Program and a Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of racial, ethnic, and religious violence, harassment, and intimidation.

House Bill 1462 had the potential to emerge as a productive response to campus hate and discrimination. The USM supported the establishment of a “Workgroup on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Other Forms of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Violence” in House Bill 1462 to “...develop model policies, guidance, and best practices...”. Such a workgroup could have leveraged the collective experience and expertise of the many parties represented, and this statewide group could identify best practices identified across different segments and sectors of the state.

Today, the USM Board of Regents (BOR) Policy on Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity requires that USM not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of protected characteristics or any other basis prohibited by federal law, the State of Maryland, or other applicable laws. This Board policy, like all the related policies at each USM institution, covers all programs, services, policies, activities, and procedures of the universities, including participation in education programs and employment. Additionally, discrimination on the basis of sex or gender-related conduct is covered by the USM’s Policy on Sex Discrimination, which was updated as recently as July 2024.

The USM supported the intent of House Bill 1462, but several provisions presented potentially costly alternatives to rights and protections that are already

established in a System policy, campus policies, as well as Federal, State, and other applicable laws. Awareness is key to creating a campus community based upon mutual respect. USM institutions work to increase awareness in a number of ways – many that are not part of an official policy. Institutions would have the flexibility needed if the provisions of this bill could be encompassed in university policies or procedures.

[SB 9 \(HB 479\)](#)

Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval – Revisions

USM Position: Favorable

Status: Passed

Chapter 963 of 2024 established a new process for academic program approval and institutional mission statements based on identifying State and regional workforce needs. Under that process, MHEC must require each public four-year institution of higher education to submit a letter of intent to MHEC that identifies each new graduate-level program that an institution intends to propose for approval; a letter of intent must be submitted every six months with all new graduate programs the institution intends to propose within the upcoming six-month to two-year period.

Chapter 963 also created a special approval process for graduate-level “emerging workforce need programs,” for which specified institutions of higher education were given a first right to submit a notice of intent of program proposal. Senate Bill 9 repeals the provisions of Chapter 963 that granted those institutions the exclusive right (for 90 days) to propose emerging workforce need programs.

The bill also requires private nonprofit institutions of higher education to submit semi-annual letters of intent to MHEC, putting them in the same posture as public institutions of higher education. It also clarifies that letters of intent are intended for collaboration and feedback rather than conferring any right of first refusal.

The USM was supportive of the original recommendations of the Workgroup introduced in House Bill 1244 (2024). The recommendations provide an opportunity for all Maryland institutions to thrive and most importantly to ensure a predictable, transpar-

ent, and collegial process for the review of program proposals which is so important to the students who wish to study in our diverse institutions. These issues are central to USM’s ability to serve the students of our state and prepare the workforce for the future. Our graduates will drive economic growth, foster innovation, and strengthen our Maryland communities.

Together, and with support from the Maryland Higher Education Commission, we can ensure students can find post-secondary options that match their hopes and needs.

[SB 82](#)

College Preparatory Programs and College Admissions Applications – Fees – Prohibition

USM Position: Unfavorable

Status: Did Not Pass

Senate Bill 82 would have made certain college preparatory programs free and prohibited Maryland public institutions of higher education from charging Maryland high school graduates college admission application fees.

The USM strategic plan, Vision 2030, has a goal to have USM reflect the full spectrum of the state. USM institutions engage in extensive outreach to engage young people from under-resourced communities across the state so they are encouraged to pursue higher education. Once students are admitted, our institutions work hard to provide need-based aid, and over half of all students leave with no debt.

The System appreciated the bill’s intention to make college applications affordable for everyone. All USM institutions have a fee waiver process so low-income students do not have to pay for college applications. Those that participate in the Common Application also use its fee waiver process. High school counselors and community-based organizations are familiar with this process, and institutions’ web pages make the information easy to find. But many tens of thousands of applicants can afford application fees, and the fiscal impact of this bill was prohibitive for our institutions. The University of Maryland, College Park receives about 60,000 college applications, and it alone would have seen an impact of upwards of \$2 million.

[SB 151](#)

Higher Education – Disciplinary Records – Use in Admissions and Disciplinary Proceedings

USM Position: Favorable with Amendment

Status: Did Not Pass

Senate Bill 151 would have prohibited a higher education institution from utilizing an admissions application that contains questions about an applicant’s disciplinary record and authorized an institution of higher education to make inquiries into and consider information regarding a student’s disciplinary record for discipline related to academic dishonesty.

Admissions personnel recognize that disciplinary records from a student’s educational past can bear the traces of bias and could unfairly disadvantage students. Consequently, USM institutions do not disqualify an applicant just because of the existence of such a disciplinary record.

The challenge for our campuses was that the bill disallowed inquiries into disciplinary records for decisions about campus residency or for offering supportive counseling or services. It is rare that a discipline record impacts a decision about residency, but when it does happen, the situation has likely been deemed by professionals to carry serious risk either for the student or other students or staff. Such inquiries for residency can be made for people who have a criminal history and they should also be allowed for students with disciplinary records.

An inquiry into a discipline record can shed light on challenges a student has had—and that enhanced understanding can help campus professionals assist a student. Secondary schools have access to various student records to help assign resources to them, but higher education institutions do not always have that information. The concern in this type of situation is the student’s own welfare, particularly if the student is going to be living away from home. The transition to college life can be stressful and fraught, and the more information USM institutions are provided, the more supports can be in place before the student arrives on campus.

The USM offered an amendment so that a student’s criminal history “or disciplinary record” could be considered for decisions regarding access to campus residency or for offering supportive counseling.

[SB 889](#)

**Criminal Law – Distribution of Students’
Personal Information – Prohibition**

**USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass**

Senate Bill 889 would have prohibited a person from distributing personal identifying information (PII) or images of another student with intent to harm. A person who violated the Act would be guilty of a misdemeanor and would have been subject to imprisonment of up to 1 year or a fine of up to \$5,000 or both. A Letter of Information was provided to the committee explaining the USM’s interest and work to protect student privacy.

In 2020, the USM supported and worked to pass [House Bill 1122](#). The bill required each public institution of higher education to review and designate systems within the respective institution as systems of record and established numerous technical specifications for the protection of institutions’ information systems and PII.

Broadly, each public institution of higher education must: develop and adopt a privacy governance program to govern each system of record; develop and adopt an information security and risk management program for the protection of PII; publish a privacy notice on its website; and follow specified procedures when destroying PII records; and follow specified procedures when it discovers or is notified of a breach of the security of one of its systems.

In addition, the bill formed a condition that institutions create a privacy program that grants individuals several rights including the right to request: a listing of the information held about an individual, the correction of information that the individual feels is inaccurate, and the deletion of information about the individual that the university may have no reason to hold.

[SB 899](#)

**Education – High School Class Rankings and
Guaranteed Admissions to Public Senior
Institutions of Higher Education**

**USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass**

Senate Bill 899 would have required Maryland high schools to rank their students and then for USM institutions to accept those students based on that rank. The bill closely resembled legislation in Wisconsin and has similarities to guaranteed admissions policies in other states. Some states exclude the flagship institution from guaranteed admissions or have other limits tied to various criteria. The implementation of the bill was also contingent upon the existence of high school rank, which is currently not available from a high number of high schools across the state.

The USM supported what seemed to be goals of this bill: to ensure that students know that if they do well in school, they have a place in our public higher education system and to ensure that public higher education institutions reach students whose communities have been under-represented in higher education.

USM universities strive to reflect the full spectrum of the State. In addition to three well-regarded Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the USM is home to three more Minority Serving Institutions. For many Maryland students of color, these institutions are the college of choice. But four more USM universities, as well as the Universities at Shady Grove, have highly diverse undergraduate populations, and all campuses are engaged in proactive outreach to attract students who belong to communities under-represented in higher education.



ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

[HB 159 \(SB 288\)](#)

**Arbitration Reform for State Employees Act of
2025**

**USM Position: Unfavorable
Status: Did Not Pass**

House Bill 159 proposed a constitutional amendment that, if approved by the voters during the next general election, would have required the Governor to fund all terms of memoranda of understanding (MOU) or binding arbitration involving the State—including the USM—and the exclusive representatives of their respective employees. In addition, it would have required the selection of a neutral arbitrator to oversee all aspects of collective bargaining in specified circumstances and expanded the matters subject to negotiation.

House Bill 159 looked to shift the funding of negotiated increased costs away from the General Assembly and directly on to USM institutions. The revisions included in House Bill 159 specifically removed the condition that matters incorporated in a USM MOU requiring the appropriation of funds be referred to the General Assembly for that appropriation. This legislation also looked to expand the mandatory subjects of bargaining to specifically include fringe benefits and health benefits.

The proposed changes implemented under HB 159 would have had a significant impact on the USM. First, it was uncertain how the USM could accomplish the negotiation of fringe and health benefits, which is largely controlled by the state. This expansion also had the potential to significantly increase employer costs, particularly if matters of fringe benefits and health benefits were submitted to an arbitrator.

[SB 750 \(HB 661\)](#)

**State Personnel – Collective Bargaining –
Faculty**

**USM Position: Unfavorable
Status: Did Not Pass**

Senate Bill 750 would have provided collective bargaining rights to certain faculty at select State institutions of higher education and establish separate collective bargaining units for faculty and contingent, contractual, or temporary faculty; and authorize bargaining units to combine as one single bargaining unit. In testimony, the USM spoke to the potential to undermine the successful and ongoing support of Academic Freedom and Shared Governance that makes the USM so effective, and the state investment so powerful.

Academic Freedom is a long-standing tradition in American higher education, that has been around since 1940, that the American Association for University Professors (AAUP) defines as: “...*the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher education to investigate and discuss the issues in his or her academic field, and to teach or publish findings without interference from political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities. Academic freedom also protects the right of a faculty member to speak freely when participating in institutional governance, as well as to speak freely as a citizen.*”

According to AAUP—the best protection for academic freedom are: “...*institutional rules and regulations that comport with procedural recommendations developed by the AAUP, specify how and why an institution can terminate a faculty member’s service, and provide for faculty tenure. Tenured appointments should be terminated only for cause and should be considered by an elected faculty committee.*”

The USM has such processes at each of its universities. Essentially, academic freedom does NOT rely on the ability of faculty to collectively bargain. **Shared Governance** has been an integral part of higher education for 100 years, and it is a critical way of ensuring meaningful faculty and graduate student participation in institutional governance.

This process is not just a “theory”. Each campus in the USM has a shared governance body for their faculty. As our universities are diverse in structure, each shared governance body operates in a slightly different manner. The key element, however, is that the members of the faculty shared governance body are partners in work related to faculty personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. At the system level, we have the Council of University System Faculty. This body advises the Chancellor and reports regularly to the Board of Regents. Its responsibility is to consider and make recommendations on matters of System wide professional and educational concern to the faculty and matters to which faculty bring special expertise.

Shared governance begins with the belief that the faculty and administration feel that they are “partners in a common project”. This is what the “shared” in shared governance means. This doesn’t imply that there is agreement each time, but there is collegiality and respect.

Moreover, USM has a systemwide policy on faculty grievances. (II-4.00 POLICY ON FACULTY GRIEVANCES) This policy requires that each institution adopt procedures whereby faculty grievances may be presented for formal review and resolution. The policy applies to anyone holding a recognized faculty rank, regardless of tenure status or percent time of employment. The grievance policy is shared by the campuses in the Faculty Handbook and the policy is administered, typically, via a campus faculty senate committee.

Broadly stated, not all faculty do the same work. The USM was appreciative that the Senate committee adopted amendments to the original bill that better defined “part-time faculty” to mean “*...nontenure track temporary, contingent, or contractual adjunct employees of a System institution...whose primary assignments involve academic classroom instructional responsibilities and who teach more than one class per semester.*”

Additional amendment to the bill also stated that “part-time faculty” does not include: “(i) *officers; (ii) adjunct faculty who teach a standardized, pre-designed, and temporary curriculum per course and whose status is temporary, contingent, or contractual on a per course basis for a defined period of 12 weeks or less; or iii) student workers.*”

The bill would have established broadly defined bargaining units which lack the requisite community of interest for appropriate and effective bargaining. As described above, and re-affirmed by Senate committee amendment, there are significant differences in the functions and responsibilities of tenure track/tenured faculty as compared to adjunct faculty. Likewise, there are significant differences in the expectations for and needs of full-time versus part-time faculty. In establishing proper bargaining units, the general tenets of labor law require that the positions in the unit share a sufficient community of interest such that they may reasonably be grouped together for purposes of collective bargaining. Further, nothing in this bill would have restricted these newly established units from electing to negotiate on a consolidated basis if represented by the same exclusive representative – something we would argue is not appropriate for these units.

[HB 793](#)

University System of Maryland – Academic Facilities Bonding Authority

USM Position: Favorable
Status: Passed

House Bill 793 was a departmental bill that authorizes the use of \$30 million in academic facilities bonds for the purpose of financing construction, renovation, and renewal projects at University System of Maryland (USM) buildings and campuses. Similar legislation has been approved regularly each year on behalf of the USM.

The USM annually surveys its institutions to assess the size and magnitude of the system’s deferred maintenance and facilities renewal needs. The survey instrument has been revised in recent years to measure the backlog more precisely. Currently, institutions categorize deferred maintenance cost as either structural/envelope, mechanical/electrical systems, or life safety/regulatory. In addition, institutions report on costs associated with programmatic improvements which include renovations, remodeling, reconfiguration, modernization, and information technology/communications.

[HB 806 \(SB 554\)](#)

Public Information Act – Frivolous, Vexatious, or Abusive Requests – Remedies

USM Position: Favorable
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 806 would have made several important changes to identify and address “vexatious requesters” and remind the public of proper request procedures and what constitutes a reasonable request.

Frivolous and vexatious public information (PIA) requests are rare but, when they target the institutions of the USM, they can disrupt and diminish staff hours better spent with students and faculty. As a result, it makes it harder to respond to legitimate PIA requests from the press, interest groups, and members of the public in a timely fashion. That’s why, a few years ago, the General Assembly created a process for custodians to seek relief from the PIA Compliance Board (PIACB) from frivolous, vexatious, or in bad faith requests.

House Bill 806 would have been an extension of that work. It would have added “abusive” to the list of requests for which a custodian could seek relief from the PIACB and allowed custodians to go directly to circuit court to seek an order that a request is frivolous, vexatious, abusive, or in bad faith. In addition, the bill would have clarified and expanded the possible relief that the PIACB (or a court) could give and leave it to the PIACB’s (or court’s) discretion to make the remedy match the problem.

Finally, to solve a separate problem, House Bill 806 would have permitted the PIACB to dismiss complaints deemed frivolous, vexatious, or in bad faith. This would have allowed the PIACB to focus on the important substantive issues, rather than frivolous complaints from requesters.

[HB 819 \(SB 653\)](#)

Procurement – Employee Stock Ownership Plan Preference – Pilot

USM Position: Unfavorable
Status: Passed

House Bill 819 establishes a price preference for bids and proposals with certain institutions of higher education that utilize an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP).

The fiscal impact of House Bill 819 was difficult to determine and the USM successfully sought an exemption, by way of amendment, from the requirements in the legislation.

The bill allows certain entities – including Morgan State University, Saint Mary’s College of Maryland, and Baltimore City Community College – to use an “evaluation factor” during the procurement process of up to 10% for companies that have employee stock ownership plans, subject to the approval of the Board of Public Works.

The bill would have had an operational impact necessitating changes to the USM Procurement Policies and Procedures that were updated last year with the approval of the USM Board of Regents, review of the Administrative Executive and Legislative Review Committee and approval of the Maryland Board of Public Works. The bill would have also required USM to establish a price preference for bidders/offers who can verify that they offer one (of four) ESOPs the IRC allows.



[SB 555 \(HB 821\)](#)

Public Information Act - Denials – Pending Litigation

USM Position: Favorable
Status: Did Not Pass

Senate Bill 555, as amended, would have authorized, but not require, a custodian of a public record under the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA) to deny inspection of a record created for the purposes of pending or reasonably anticipated litigation to which (1) the State, a State agency, or a political subdivision of the State is or may be a party or (2) an officer or an employee of the State or a political subdivision of the State, because of that person’s office or employment, is or may be a party.

The provisions did not apply to a record that is a court record or pertains to litigation that has been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled. The bill defined “reasonably anticipated litigation” as a situation where there is concrete evidence that litigation is expected to occur based on current facts and circumstances.

The exemption is in addition to any other exemptions (like attorney-client privilege or work product) that might apply, but the special additional protection provided for by this provision would apply only until the litigation is over. Similar exemptions exist in at least 7 other states including California, Delaware, Missouri, Oklahoma Oregon, Texas, and Vermont. More importantly, the exemption would put government litigants on a level playing field with private litigants, because it precludes private litigants from using the PIA to obtain early discovery or to circumvent discovery rules—a disadvantage for government litigants when they are facing private litigants.

For these reasons, the USM offered testimony in support of the Office of the Attorney General’s work on Senate Bill 555.

[HB 920](#)

Institutions of Postsecondary Education – Institutional Debt – Report

USM Position: Joint Letter of Opposition with MACC/MICUA
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 920 would have required post-secondary education institutions to submit a report on institutional debt to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) by October 1st of each year, beginning in 2026. It would have authorized the Commission to assess a civil penalty, up to \$10,000 per violation, against any institution who failed to submit a report or knowingly include inaccurate information in a report. This legislation would have also required the Commission to follow certain notice and hearing procedures before assessing a civil penalty.

The USM, MICUA (Maryland Independent College and University Association), and MACC (Maryland Association of Community Colleges) submitted a joint letter of opposition. House Bill 920 failed to provide a purpose for collecting the data and an explanation as to how the information would be utilized. It was unclear how the annual report would help to achieve a certain goal or result. This bill required compiling data that institutions do not routinely collect.



[HB 1417 \(SB 480\)](#)

Department of General Services – Clean Energy Procurement Program – Establishment

USM Position: Unfavorable
Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 1417 would have required the Department of General Services (DGS), in consultation with the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee, the USM, and the Maryland Clean Energy Center, to establish a Clean Energy Procurement Program in DGS on or before January 1, 2026.

This bill would have required the USM to complete a life-cycle analysis of Biogas. The USM does not have personnel in the System Office with the knowledge or expertise to conduct such an analysis. Moreover, lifecycle analysis of biogas costs considers all the financial expenses associated with producing biogas throughout its entire life cycle – from the initial feedstock collection and processing to the final energy production.

House Bill 1417 was silent on the costs for construction, operation, maintenance, feedstock acquisition, and potential end-of-life disposal, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the overall economic viability of a biogas project.

[HOUSE BILL 102](#)

Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI) – Revisions

USM Position: None
Status: Passed

and

[HOUSE BILL 1503](#)

State Personnel – Paid Family and Medical Leave

USM Position: Letter of Information and Submitted Amendments
Status: Passed

House Bill 102 and House Bill 1503 traveled as “companion” legislation to make several adjustments and amendments to 2022’s Time to Care Act (TCA). The TCA established Maryland’s Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI), which provides partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks away from work to all covered employees in Maryland for a qualifying reason. Under the TCA, the FAMLI fund is seeded from required contributions based on a percentage of employee wages, shared equally by the employer (in the form of a new payroll tax) and employees (in the form of paycheck deductions), beginning on July 1, 2025. The USM has been preparing to implement FAMLI.

The passage of House Bill 102 delays the start of the FAMLI fund seeding period until January 1, 2027, and makes other revisions.

Requested by the Department of Budget and Management, *House Bill 1503 will establish up to 12 weeks of fully paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) for all employees, including temporary employees, of all units of government in the Executive Branch, including any unit with an independent personnel system such as the USM.*

It appears that PFML will be provided to all covered Executive Branch employees in lieu of leave under the State’s FAMLI program. As originally drafted, HB 1503 would have required the provisions of PFML to be implemented and administered in accordance with regulations to be adopted by the Secretary of Budget and Management. Several favorable amendments were made to HB 1503 to recognize the statutory

authority of the USM Board of Regents (BOR) over the management of the affairs of the USM, and to provide clarity over implementation of the proposed program.

House Bill 1503, PFML will be made available to Executive Branch employees beginning on July 1, 2026, under regulations to be issued by the DBM Secretary, or in the case of the USM, through the policies, procedures, and guidelines issued under the statutory authority of the BOR and implemented by the USM Chancellor and Institution Presidents.

Under House Bill 1503, up to 12 weeks of PFML benefits will be available for the same qualifying reasons as the State’s FAMLI program, but at the employee’s full pay, without the required contributions, and without the minimum eligibility requirement tied to hours worked.

House Bill 1503 repeals the statutory Parental Leave benefit covering Executive Branch employees, since it becomes unnecessary when fully paid PFML benefits are provided on July 1, 2026. With the repeal, employees will no longer be required to exhaust their accrued Annual Leave and Personal Leave when they take parental leave under PFML. While at full pay there will be significantly higher utilization of the benefit likely creating operational challenges and broader fiscal impacts, HB 1503 will overall be easier to administer. Providing fully paid PFML is a valuable employee benefit that will enhance an institution’s recruitment and retention strategies and improve the employee experience.

The USM will be amending certain policies, and creating new where needed, to conform with the statutory requirements of House Bill 1503.

[SB 453 \(HB 507\)](#)

State Contracts – Prohibited Provisions

USM Position: Support Written
Status: Favorable

Senate Bill 453 clarifies the claims to which a limitation of liability in a State contract could apply. The bill makes clear that property is limited to real property or tangible personal property. Without this clarification, property could be interpreted broadly to include, for example, software systems or data. This means that contractors have to manage the risks associated with unlimited liability for damage to higher-risk property, such as software systems or data.

Second, the bill clarifies that State contracts may not include a provision that limits the State’s ability to recover the difference in the cost of the replacement contractor to perform the services not performed by the original contractor, but only to the extent the cost exceeds what was to be paid to the original contractor to perform such services. Without this clarification, the language may be interpreted to allow the State to seek the entire cost of a replacement contractor, regardless of whether the original contractor had performed any of the services and regardless of whether the cost of the replacement contractor was less than or equal to the costs provided for in the contract with the original contractor.



[SB 294 \(HB 376\)](#)

Maryland Cybersecurity Council – Alterations

USM Position: Favorable with Amendment
Status: Passed

Senate Bill 294 modifies the membership, organization, and duties of the Maryland Cybersecurity Council (MCC). Staffed by the University of Maryland Global Campus, the MCC includes representatives from State agencies, members of the General Assembly, and appointees by the Attorney General. Although the USM did not testify on the original House or Senate versions of bill, USM staff reviewed iterations of the bill and requested amendments. The first allows the Chancellor to be the designator of two additional representatives to the MCC, and the other had to do with “geographic diversity.”

Although Senate Bill 294 dedicates seats to specific USM institutions, the USM assured legislators that the Chancellor will seek individuals for whom “geography” and “technology” are true obstacles to quality cybersecurity education and training. If the idea is to cultivate greater access to advanced technology and proficiency in using digital tools and platforms, then leveraging a variety of online resources and educational tools to enhance the learning experience may drive more improvement. For urban and rural institutions alike – whether in Princess Anne at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, or in Allegany County on the campus of Frostburg State University – exposure to diverse technological environments fosters creativity and innovation in problem-solving.

Understanding the legislative intent, the USM offered the amendment as a way to strengthen the work of the MCC and preserve USM’s ability to bring distinct voices to the conversation.

[SB 977](#)

Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law – Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

USM Position: Letter of Information
Status: Did Not Pass

Senate Bill 977 aimed to enhance the protection of personal information by restricting state and local agencies from sharing data with federal entities for immigration enforcement without a valid warrant. The bill sought to make existing standards more stringent, particularly in situations where immigration enforcement may be involved. The USM had not taken a formal position on this bill but acknowledged its intent to safeguard private information.

The bill added units of state or local government to the section of the law that already requires law enforcement to deny access to records in certain situations. The amended text would have required all units of state or local government to deny access to records to that may be used in enforcing federal immigration law unless the individual presented a valid warrant issued by a state or federal court and which “...*clearly identifies the record to be accessed...*”.

The USM recognized two potentially significant problems with this. First, not all activities “enforcing federal immigration law” require a warrant. USM institutions, like all employers, are subject to [I-9 inspections](#), and this does not require a judicially issued warrant. Also, any USM universities that act as visa sponsors have compliance obligations. For example, we must report information about international students, visiting scholars, and employees on F-1 and J-1 visas in a Department of Homeland Security database called [SEVIS](#) (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System).

Likewise, with employment-based visas (H-1B, O-1, TN, E-3), USM institutions may (and occasionally do) receive site visits from the Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) unit within Homeland Security Investigations. They are seeking to confirm that the institution has represented the nature of the employment correctly in filings. Some of the employment-based visas (H-1B and E-3) have U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) components that are subject to audit. Even though that is a separate

agency, it is related to an immigration application and DOL can refer the findings from those audits to immigration authorities to act on the immigration status piece.

Moreover, USM employees are public employees that could be “obstructing justice” by standing in the way of a lawful warrant. By expanding the scope of this Law Enforcement Database law to all state agencies, the bill placed ordinary public employees (who are generally expected to uphold the law) in the role of determining whether a search warrant is “valid” and responsible for pushing back if the warrant does not “clearly identify the records to be accessed.” However, the validity of warrants (including questions about the specificity of the warrant) are generally things to be challenged in a court of law, not during an execution of the search.

Also, as a matter of criminal law, USM understands search warrants can be kept under seal in certain circumstances, and when it comes to data, they typically describe the thing to be seized (e.g., someone’s cell phone, computer, server, etc.) – not the specific record to be accessed on the thing to be seized.

If the Committee had moved forward with Senate Bill 977, the USM asked for the adoption of a Rule of Construction noting:

“(3) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE OR AUTHORIZE AN EMPLOYEE OF A UNIT OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO INTERFERE WITH A PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SERVE OR EXECUTE A SEARCH WARRANT OR CONDUCT A LEGALLY AUTHORIZED SEARCH AND SEIZURE.

(4) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION IN THIS SECTION “ENFORCING FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAW” DOES NOT INCLUDE INSPECTION OF I-9 RECORDS OR PROVISION OF INFORMATION REQUIRED BY A FEDERAL AGENCY WHEN A UNIT OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS SPONSORED A VISA FOR A STUDENT, EMPLOYEE OR AFFILIATE.”

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

HB 211 (SB 166)

State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Graduate Assistants

USM Position: Unfavorable

Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 211 would have granted collective bargaining rights to certain graduate assistants at USM institutions, Morgan State University, or St. Mary’s College who is a teaching, administrative, or research assistant, or in a comparable position, a fellow or postdoctoral intern; and would have established a separate collective bargaining unit for graduate assistants.

The USM firmly understands that students are not workers and understand that the duties performed are directly related to their respective status as students. For most, if not all, it is aligned with training as a scholar and instructor. It is impossible to tease apart anything that is not directly related to training from the activities students do as a graduate assistant or research assistant. Graduate students who are graduate teaching or research assistants typically receive not only a financial stipend but also tuition remission (i.e., free tuition) and benefits.

USM Board of Regents Policy III – 7.11 Policy on Graduate Assistantships provides clear guidance to the campuses on issues the graduate students have raised including, but not limited to mentorship, grievance procedures and meet and confer processes.

HB 1413

Labor and Employment – Employer Communications During Nonworking Hours – Right to Disconnect

USM Position: Letter of information

Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 1413 would have required employers to establish a policy that granted employees the right to ignore communications from their employer during nonworking hours and prohibited an employer from requiring that an employee communicate with the employer during nonworking hours.

Colleges and universities are highly dynamic academic and administrative enterprises that must operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The nature of the USM’s workforce is unlike that of any other state agency. It is comprised of several types of employees, including Faculty members who teach, mentor, and support their students, perform research, and provide service to their community and the state. Faculty work is done everywhere and across time zones – on USM campuses and online, within and outside the State of Maryland, and sometimes even outside of the country.

Similarly, USM Staff support the 24/7 operations of their institutions, centered around their campuses, to provide student services, research, IT, and other support beyond a standard 8:30 to 5:00 schedule. Some staff, sometimes deemed essential to operations, may be provided with institution-issued cellphones so they can be reached after hours. The USM’s Nonexempt staff do have established working hours, which are communicated in writing, and Nonexempt staff are paid for all after-hours work.

The USM has Nonexempt policies and pay premiums for On-call and Callback work, and Nonexempt Staff are paid premium overtime at time-and-a-half their regular rate of pay when their hours exceed 40 in the workweek. To prohibit after-hours communications from the employer could severely impact institution operations and result in the need to hire additional staff to provide afterhours support.

The USM’s Exempt Staff are Executives, Administrators, and Managers, as defined by the FLSA, and are ineligible to earn overtime after they work 40 hours in a week, because of the nature of their work. Exempt employees are expected to work whenever needed, and whatever hours are necessary to do their work, on a schedule that satisfies the requirements of the job.

The USM’s Exempt Staff are not generally required to work a standard work schedule like the USM’s Nonexempt Staff, nor do they have an established number of hours they must work in a day. Instead, the USM policy governing the full-time Exempt Staff member’s workload requirement is expressed in terms of the bi-weekly pay period, not workweek.



SB 26 (HB 176)

Labor and Employment – Occupational Safety and Health – Revisions (Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act)

USM Position: Letter of information

Status: Passed

Senate Bill 26 establishes a Public Employees’ Safety and Health (PESH) Unit in the Division of Labor and Industry within the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) and requires the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to head the unit. The bill also expands the existing Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) program by establishing penalties for public bodies and elected officials and enhancing notice and reporting requirements associated with public bodies, among other requirements and specifications.

The bill expands the purpose of MOSH to include standards that address workplace violence and making public bodies’ workplaces safer and more healthful. Therefore, the Commissioner of Labor and Industry must include standards for protecting employees of public bodies from workplace violence as part of the MOSH standards. The Commissioner of Labor and Industry, in consultation with the MOSH Advisory Board, must adopt, by October 1, 2026, regulations to include these standards.

Public bodies are no longer exempt from existing MOSH penalties. The bill specifies civil penalties for noncompliance for public bodies, which increase after specified days of noncompliance. The revenues from the civil penalties assessed against a public body must be distributed to a special fund to be used only for the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP).

Prior to adopting regulations, the commissioner must review, consider recommendations, and hold meetings with stakeholders. By July 1 each year, the Commissioner of Labor and Industry must publish online a written report on safety and health in public bodies.

The changes do not limit or preclude the commissioner or the commissioner’s authorized representative from inspecting a public body in accordance with any other provision under MOSH.

The USM was supportive of the initial goal of this legislation, but expressed concern that the bill would

increase administrative and fiscal burdens without a significant impact on improving the safety of working conditions for Maryland’s public employees.

A primary concern is the negative impact of civil penalties within the context of public employment. While current law allowed USM and other public employers to appeal citations for workplace safety violations, the threat of civil penalties increase the likelihood of appeals and further litigation. This might impose significant cost to the extent that the Office of Attorney General may be conflicted out of representing USM institutions if it is actively representing MOSH in pursuing civil penalty claims. Both the fines themselves and the resulting litigation costs would divert taxpayer resources that are more appropriately focused on investing resources in workplace safety.

The USM prioritizes the overall the safety and health of its employees. USM institutions already have robust health and safety programs and protocols in place. Much of the proposed legislation duplicates safety and health enforcement already conducted by MOSH and significantly increases reporting requirements and external inspections. Implementation of modified health and safety requirements, while some are redundant, will require additional staff support and enhancements to tracking software/programs across all USM institutions to implement additional reporting requirements and increased inspections.

RESEARCH, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

HB 1054 (SB 439)

Higher Education - High Impact Economic Development Activities – Alterations

USM Position: Favorable

Status: Did Not Pass

Starting July 1, House Bill 1054 sought to alter the definition of “high impact economic development activity (HIEDA)” requiring the USM and Board of Regents (BOR) to report information related to HIEDA.

Prior to 2012, USM employees’ were constrained in their ability to participate in technology transfer and commercialization activities that were an important part of the System’s strategic plan and overall state objectives at that time. In 2012, the passage and enactment of House Bill 442 established the Maryland Innovation Initiative within the Maryland Technology Development Corporation providing long-sought flexibility and relief from state ethics law and procurement practices to help facilitate and encourage tech transfer and commercialization activities resulting in a significant economic impact for the institution, the USM or the State of Maryland.

House Bill 1054 called for accounting of the amount of state or university funds being used on each HIEDA during the preceding year; the net benefit of each HIEDA; and whether the BOR believed each HIEDA is in the best interest of the state. The bill also clarified that HIEDA does not include cost savings related to the reduction in the number of university employees and would have eliminated the procurement language in the existing law.

House Bill 1054 “dovetailed” as the BoR examines the plausibility of the economic activity of each HIEDA, reviews the organizational documents associated with the creation of any new entity, and reviews business plans and financial proformas. The BoR will continue to focus on a review of any institutional plans for managing conflicts of interest that may be identified. It is important to note that the current policy provides for ongoing monitoring and oversight, including annual audits of financial statements.

The USM understands the importance to promote the evaluation and transparency of HIEDA entities, and the extent to which the objectives of each have

been achieved, is critical to promote the state’s economic interest in job creation, commercialization, and entrepreneurship.

HB 498 (SB 427)

Economic Development – Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act

USM Position: Favorable

Status: Did Not Pass

House Bill 498 would have enhanced the ability of the Department of Commerce to evaluate and incentivize employment and economic growth of the state’s key industry sectors. The USM was supportive of the Decade Act and urged a Favorable Report.

The USM’s strategic plan includes both research and economic development goals, including supporting workforce development, entrepreneurship, translation of research discoveries into solutions for the public; and driving economic impacts in Maryland. Combined, the R&D expenditures of our two biggest research universities – the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland, Baltimore – rank them 11th among all U.S. public universities. Altogether, the USM expended \$1.6 billion last year in research and sponsored programs, up 29% in the past five years. In fact, the USM ranks 15th among the country’s academic institutions in U.S. utility patents issued.

The Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zone designations utilize enhanced property and income tax credits and accelerated depreciation schedules to spur significant financial investments in designated “RISE Zones.” House Bill 498 would have expanded the geography and prioritized applicants in the “RISE Zone Catchment Areas” – an area within five miles of a qualified institution (within a designated Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zone).

House Bill 498 would have boosted the ability of USM institutions and regional centers to sponsor research parks and incubators to support their start up communities and provide venues for extending the knowledge about entrepreneurship and innovation to their local communities. Moreover, the goals of the DECADE Act were closely linked with the core values and programs dutifully overseen by the Board of Regents and the Chancellor.

IT AND CYBERSECURITY

[HB 1316](#)

Primary and Secondary Education - Youth-Centric Technology and Social Media Resource Guide

Status: Passed

House Bill 1316 requires the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, in consultation with MSDE, to develop and publish a youth-centric technology and social media resource guide that meets specified requirements. To assist in the development of the guide, NCSMH must develop a needs assessment by September 1, 2026. The guide must be completed before the 2027-2028 school year, and NCSMH must periodically update the guide. The guide must be posted on the MSDE and each county board's website and distributed to each public school and each parent teacher association for each public school in the State on or before the first day of each school year, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year.

[SB 655](#)

Courts - Artificial Intelligence Evidence Clinic Pilot Program - Establishment

Status: Passed

In light of growing issues surrounding the proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI), Senate Bill 655 establishes an Artificial Intelligence Evidence Clinic Pilot Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to provide expertise in AI to the circuit courts and the District Court through expert testimony on the authenticity of electronic evidence that a court determines may have been created or altered using AI.

The program must (1) engage college and university students, recent graduates, and faculty and technology professionals dedicated to the research and advancement of AI in order to develop expert witness resources for courts to use in cases implicating the use of AI; (2) through AOC, award grants to eligible institutions of higher education; and (3) prioritize civil cases in which one or more parties do not have legal representation or reasonable access to expert testimony.

[HB 799](#)

Economic Development - Maryland Innovation Initiative Institution Partnership Extension Program - Establishment

Status: Passed

The Maryland Innovation Initiative within TEDCO promotes technology transfer from Maryland's public and private nonprofit research institutions to the private sector. The initiative is authorized to provide grant funding or equity investment financing to a qualifying university, qualifying university-based entrepreneur, or other start-up entity to promote the commercialization of technology developed in whole or in part by a qualifying university.

House Bill 799 establishes the Maryland Innovation Initiative Institution Partnership Extension Program, implemented and administered by the initiative. The purpose of the extension program is to expand opportunities at eligible institutions for technology validation, entrepreneurial development, and industry engagement.

Eligible institutions are Bowie State University, Frostburg State University, and any other public or private nonprofit institution of higher education deemed eligible, and each institution must provide a cash match equivalent to 10% of the amount awarded under the program.

In fiscal 2027 and 2028, the Governor may include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$250,000 and \$1 million, respectively, for the program.

[HB 270 \(SB 116\)](#)

Data Center Impact Analysis and Report

Status: Passed

House Bill 270 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the University of Maryland School of Business, and the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), in coordination with the Department of Legislative Services, to conduct an analysis of the likely environmental and economic impacts of data center development in the State.

The bill requires the University of Maryland School of Business to assess, in consultation with industry experts, the potential economic and fiscal impacts of the data center industry in the State, including an evaluation of (1) the likely impact of data centers on State and local revenues and expenditures and (2) the jobs likely to be created through the construction and operation of data centers.

DLS must synthesize the respective assessments into a final report and submit the report to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 1, 2026.

[HB 757 \(SB 849\)](#)

Professional and Volunteer Firefighter Innovative Cancer Screening Technologies Program - Funding

USM Position: Support

Status: Passed

House Bill 757 funds the Professional and Volunteer Firefighter Innovative Cancer Screening Technologies Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and provides grants to local fire departments and volunteer fire companies and departments to procure innovative cancer screening tests that are not otherwise conducted during routine physical examinations or not covered by insurance.

The goal of the program is to reduce cancer mortality among firefighters while advancing the adoption of novel technologies that may also benefit the health of Marylanders and the economy of the State. House Bill 757 increases the minimum amount the Governor may include in the annual budget for the program from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Further, the bills authorize the Secretary of Health to use up to 20% of program funds to support research centers, including the University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing, in collecting, analyzing, and processing program outcome data to assess and improve the effectiveness and clinical utility of the cancer screening funded by the program.



ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL BUDGET SCORECARD -- PROGRESS OF HB351 (AND HB793, ARB BILL) THROUGH THE FY2026 BUDGET COMMITTEE PROCESS (\$'000S)

				These Figures Incl. GO Bonds, ARB Funds, and Strategic Energy Paygo				REV 4/8/25	
INST'N	PROJECTS	BOARD CIP REQUEST 6/30/24	GOVERNOR'S CIP 1/15/25	DLS RECOMM/ ANALYSIS 3/7/25	HOUSE DECISIONS 3/31/25	SENATE DECISIONS 4/2/25	CONF COMMITTEE	FINAL NUMBERS	NOTES
UMB	New School of Social Work Building	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	42,924 PC	DLS recommends replacing \$5M in GO Bond funding with \$5M in Paygo funds (from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, SEIF). HOUSE and SENATE concurred.
UMB	SOD Ambulatory Surgery Center	862 CE							
UMB	Central Electric Substation Upgrades								HOUSE added note extending \$2.89M in available FY2018 funding through June 1, 2027. SENATE concurred.
UMCP	Campus Bldg Sys and Infrastr Improv--INCL \$5M ARB Funds	12,500 C	12,500 C	5,000 C	12,500 C	12,500 C	12,500 C	12,500 C	DLS recommends \$7.5M in GO Bond funding be moved to FY2027, leaving only the \$5M in ARB funds in FY2026. HOUSE REJECTED this recommendation and maintained Governor's funding. SENATE AGREED.
UMCP	Interdisciplinary Engineering Building (Zupnik Hall): New	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	58,700 CE	DLS recommends replacing \$4M in GO Bond funding with \$4M in Paygo funds (from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, SEIF). HOUSE AND SENATE concurred.
UMCP	Grad Student Housing Subsidy	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	5,000 CE	SENATE added pre-authorizatoion of \$5M for FY2027 to continue this funding another year.
UMCP	Health and Human Sci Complex: Shell Space Fit-Out & Renov	9,020 C			2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	HOUSE added funds to this project.
BSU	Thurgood Marshall Libr and Acad Commons	5,989 P	2,230 P	2,230 P	2,230 P	2,230 P	2,230 P	2,230 P	
TU	Smith Hall Renov/Recon.	71,159 CE	71,102 CE	71,102 CE	71,102 CE	71,102 CE	71,102 CE	71,102 CE	DLS recommends replacing \$9M in GO Bond funding with \$9M in Paygo funds (from the Strategic Energy Iniative Fund, SEIF). HOUSE and SENATE concurred.
TU	Electrical Sub-Station (supplemental request)	2,718 P							
TU	Cook Library Facilities Renewal and HVAC Replacement				300 PCE	300 PCE	300 PCE	300 PCE	Project and funds added by HOUSE.
UMES	New Residence Hall					1,000 P	1,000 P	1,000 P	SENATE added these funds for Design; in a Floor Amendment, the amount was increased to \$1M.
FSU	Baseball Complex Infrastructure Improvements					1,000 PCE	1,000 PCE	1,000 PCE	SENATE added these funds
UMGC	Adelphi Admin Building Renovation								SENATE added pre-authorizatoion for \$3.2M in planning funds for FY2027
UBalt	101 W Mount Royal Ave acquisition (supplemental request)	7,600 A							
SU	Blackwell Hall Renovation	29,930 CE	35,011 CE	35,011 CE	35,011 CE	35,011 CE	35,011 CE	35,011 CE	DLS recommends replacing \$5M in GO Bond funding with \$5M in Paygo funds (from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, SEIF). HOUSE and SENATE concurred.
SU	College of Hlth and Human Svcs/ Maggs Renov (Supplemental)	NBF P							
UMBC	Sherman Hall Renovation	28,211 CE	21,211 CE	21,211 CE	21,211 CE	21,211 CE	21,211 CE	21,211 CE	
UMBC	New Student Services Building (Supplemental request)	5,903 P			5,000 P	5,000 P	5,000 P	5,000 P	Funding added by HOUSE for design.
UMBC	Stadium Synthetic Running Track Surface				530 PCE	530 PCE	530 PCE	530 PCE	Project and funds added by HOUSE.
USMO	Colwell Center Deferred Maintenance	5,099 CE	7,100 CE	7,100 CE	7,100 CE	7,100 CE	7,100 CE	7,100 CE	
USMO	Capital Facilities Renewal--INCL \$25M in ARB Funds	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	25,000 PCE	
TOTALS (\$'000s)		310,615	280,778	273,278	289,108	291,108	291,108	291,108	

*State Funds are GO Bonds (with \$30M in Academic Revenue Bonds)

A=Acquisition; P=Planning; C=Construction; E=Equipment

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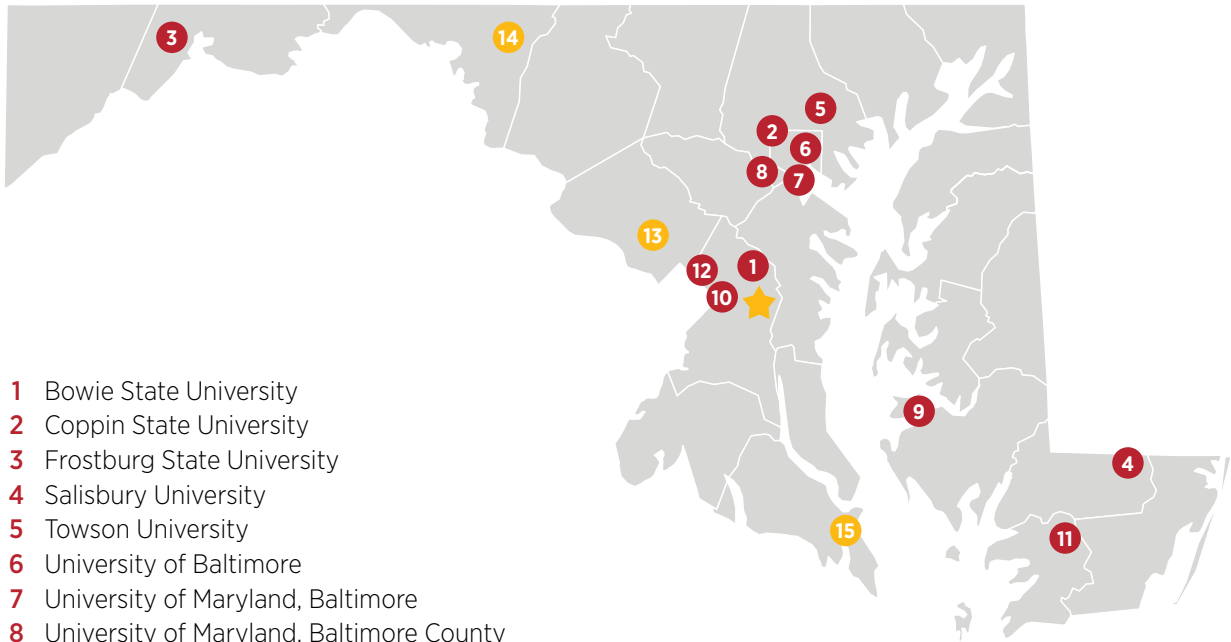
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