



**Thursday, January 23, 2020**  
**Higher Education Overview**  
**University System of Maryland FY 2021 Budget Testimony**  
**Chancellor's Comments Requested**

***Page 20 - The Chancellor should comment on factors contributing to the decline in enrollment. Further, with the projected decline in high school graduates, they should also comment on efforts that will be taken to stabilize/grow enrollment.***

In the past year, the decline in enrollment occurred for a variety of different reasons. Some of our institutions with high demand intentionally admitted fewer new students after record enrollment the year before. Last year, the USM granted 27,000 baccalaureate degrees, and with the improved student success and decreasing time-to-degree, more students exited successfully. The USM also faces some enrollment challenges caused by lower demand and increased competition. When the economy is going well and unemployment is at record lows, more people delay entry or pause their college career. USM applications are still strong and the institutions continue to position themselves to be the best choice. Enrollment is still strong and includes increasing numbers of non-degree-seeking students enrolling to meet other educational goals.

While USM is aware that the number of high school graduates per year are expected to decrease nationally in 2025, we believe Maryland and its institutions are in a better position than most states. The projected number of Maryland high school graduates in ten years is approximately equal to 60,000-65,000 we have had for the last few years. Based on the trends and data as presented in the Higher Education overview, by the Department of Education, and by the Maryland Longitudinal Data System, we know that about 45,000 enroll in college. There are more than enough high school graduates for all of Maryland's institutions--public and private. We believe we have high quality, affordable institutions in Maryland that meet the needs of Maryland students. The key strategy is for USM to work to decrease the number of students leaving by offering the customer service that will help a student find the best fit within USM rather than risk losing a student to a higher-cost option out of state.

USM institutions remain first-choice institutions by:

- Redesigning academic programs to ensure competitiveness
- Developing the right program mix with popular programs
- Increasing early admission offers with competitive financial aid packages

Our institutions are also developing better relationships with prospective students that will decrease the "melt" from students deciding to end the college career in the summer before it begins in the fall.

Decreasing the "melt" includes:

- More summer bridge programs that engage students and help prepare them for immediate college credit bearing courses
- Piloting adaptive learning techniques in on-line courses to better prepare and engage students
- Promote early completion of the FAFSA for those in financial need so students have quicker decisions on financial aid

More students staying in Maryland is better for the student because of a lower-cost pathway and it is better for the state because the educated adult stays local and stays in our workforce.

The other strategy to increase enrollment is retaining the students we already have enrolled. USM retention rates have been improving and we want to move higher from 87% to 90%.

The USM increased retention rates and continues to increase rates by:

- Expanding intrusive advising, and basing needs assessments on predictive analytics
- Expanding successful academic innovations including flipped classrooms, more experiential learning engagements, and exploring additional support systems using online and other technologies
- Improving transparent transfer pathways from 2 to 4-year institutions
- Expanding the use of open educational resources to keep costs to students down (over \$6M already saved) and decreasing financial stop-outs
- Increasing the types of credentials earned in current course content recognized by employers
- Focusing more financial aid on transfer and advanced students to decrease the financial burden and increase completion

USM continues to work with high schools to develop interventions to academically prepare students for college. It is in everyone's interest to decrease remediation because we know these students are more likely to dropout and it increases the time-to-degree for the successful students.

Strategies to reduce remediation:

- Working with community colleges to build alternative math pathways (First in the World grant and MMRI [Maryland Math Reform Initiative]), accelerating students out of developmental math courses and into statistics courses that align with their majors
- Using multiple measures for more appropriate placement, recognizing what students already know, thereby reducing "over remediating" and extra non-credit coursework.
- Working with MSDE on the new Maryland Math Alignment project, better aligning high school math courses with college admissions and success expectations
- BPower initiative that has prepared several hundred students in Baltimore City Public Schools with a College Readiness Course and provided introductory math and English courses via dual enrollment. While the college going rate for BCPS graduates is 43%, the BPower cohorts are enrolling at a rate of 68% in cohorts now in 23 high schools
- ACES program with the Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove. Thousands of students identified early in their high school career are prepared to go to college and ultimately earn a college degree.

Finally, USM is positioned to attract working adults especially through our regional center programs, online at UMGC, or at institutions like the University of Baltimore and Coppin State University. It is critical that working adults complete their credentials. In the future, the USM also expects more working adults will return to the University to retool to meet industry needs.

The USM strategies for working adults are:

- Expanding programs that recruit near completers back to programs
- Increasing online and hybrid offerings that fit into a working student's schedule
- Making course scheduling more flexible and accessible
- Expanding the portfolio of credentials including badges and certificates

This again underscores the importance of developing positive relationships with our prospective students. From the very beginning we want them to find the best fit now and because of this positive experience, they will find the best fit in the future. More is being done. More can be done. We want Marylanders to stay in Maryland and to enroll in USM when they need additional education and certifications.

***Page 26 - The Chancellor should comment on programs or initiatives to re-enroll and ensure successful outcomes of those students with SCND (Some College, No Degree).***

Students that leave with some college and without a degree are the very students USM wants to retain and represent a strategy for stabilizing enrollment. Based on the analysis presented by the National Student Clearinghouse as presented in the Higher Education Overview, the USM identified about 40,000 students since FY 2014 that exited the university with two years of college completed. About half of these are our adult-learner population at UMGC. As mentioned, the various strategies for these students involve course scheduling and expanding the earned credentials in course work, so that they can be successful as they progress.

The USM also found that about 30% of the 40,000 exited with a cumulative GPA below 2.00 and we suspect that many in the NSC analyses are also students with lower outcomes. While not insurmountable, the options are limited for these students. With the right advising, our institutions can work with students to find pathways to credentials and badges based on the credits earned.

On a positive note, almost 25% of this group (nearly 9,000) earned a degree outside of USM. Although we would prefer to be their first choice, they clearly found success and the right fit elsewhere. This rate was much higher rate than cited in the article. In the future, we hope their experience was positive and they return for an advanced degree or additional credentials.

Of the remaining 30,000 students without a credential, thousands (some with lower GPA) continued to re-enroll outside of the USM and Maryland. This gives USM a more narrowed focus point. Our outreach to these students includes:

- Expanding industry-relevant programs that recruit near-completers
- Advertising online and hybrid courses and programs that fit into the working student's schedule
- Offering courses in more locations and at better times
- Expanding the credentials including badges and certificates earned that includes completed course work