



USM Student Council February 2025 Report to the USM Board of Regents

Good morning Chair Gooden, Chancellor Perman, the Board of Regents, and University Presidents,

We as a council wanted to offer our condolences to Frostburg on the passing of President Nowachick, and we are extremely grateful to him for all his leadership and support to us students.

The council had its first general meeting of the semester earlier this month. The government relations team first shared more about the Governor's plan for the USM budget. With Advocacy Day coming up next week, we hope to not only advocate for two bills the council voted favorably on, but also to convey the importance of higher education to students and the impact our institutions, the experiential learning, and scholarships have had on us.

The rest of the meeting was an open conversation centered on the ways in which ongoing federal shifts and executive orders could potentially impact students in higher education, and it naturally grouped into four themes:

Research and Medicine:

- Research papers getting redacted; federal institutions scrubbing research that includes certain key phrases or words centered around vaccines and gender identity.
- Rebranding/ making changes to master's degrees on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Campus Safety:

- What will Immigration and Customs Enforcement interrogation look like on campuses?
- Students are hoping for more communication from institutions, including whether there are legal resources/ hotlines for students to be informed of how to comply with federal agents while still protecting their own constitutional rights.

Financial:

- Looking ahead at potential increases in financial aid requests given unexpected federal layoffs.
- A potential reduction in enrollment of international students.

Internships and Career Plans:

- Change in the job and internship landscape for students– might affect future career plans with federal departments or even corporations with shifting stances on DEI.

With all of that, I would like to end on a more uplifting note. One student mentioned the importance of creating community among student leadership across our campuses, and that inspired a conversation on holding a retreat or summit centered around leadership, career building, and advocacy– bringing us together beyond our monthly meetings and newsletter system. We should hopefully see a Student Council retreat on the cards for future years.

Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

Vainavi Gambhir

President, University System of Maryland Student Council