



USM Student Council's Report to the USM Board of Regents

September 2023 Full Board of Regents Meeting, University of Maryland Global Campus

Organization: University System of Maryland Student Council

Representation: Vainavi Gambhir, President

Good morning Chair Gooden, Board of Regents, and Esteemed Colleagues,

My name is Vainavi Gambhir, and I am a third-year undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am extremely grateful to serve as the President of the University System of Maryland Student Council for the 2023-24 term. I would also like to introduce Arsalan Siddiqui as the Vice President of Graduate Affairs and Clifton Crosby Jr. as the Vice President of Undergraduate Affairs.

Since the start of the term in July, the Executive Team has had multiple meetings to discuss our goals for the term and plan for the execution of various initiatives. We also sent out applications and collected interest for Board of Director positions: including Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Director of Government Relations, and Director of Student Affairs. Candidates were interviewed and then selected in early September.

Below are the Board of Directors for this term:

Directors of Government Affairs: Meghna Chandrasekaran and Conor Curran

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Emily Madison

Director of Student Affairs: Elisha Urayayi

On Sunday, September 10, we hosted our first USMSC General Body Meeting at the Elkins Building in Adelphi which had a turnout of over 20 attendees from almost all USM institutions. Apart from the general onboarding protocol, we invited Dr. Tom Abrams from CUSF who presented on HyFlex– improving synchronous learning technology for students with accommodation needs and barriers to in-person attendance. HyFlex received the endorsement and enthusiasm of many representatives at the meeting, with some even having personal stories of impact to share. Additionally, we discussed the proposed amendments to the policy on academic accommodations for religious observances. It initiated conversations on guidelines and standardized processes that individual campuses could adopt to make religious exemptions easier to accommodate.

We also have a few goals for the term that we are in the process of planning and executing.

(1) Inaugural 2024 USM Student Speaker Forum Event

The USM Student Speaker Forum will bring together undergraduate and graduate students from across institutions, providing a platform to share unique, innovative, and/or compelling perspectives in a TED-like conference format. This event will be inclusive of non-verbal modes of expression such as visual arts, music, movement, and more. By introducing this event, we hope to provide a platform that champions more student voices and encourages cross-campus collaboration.


(2) Student Regent Interviews – Interviewing and sending candidates to Chancellor Perman

(3) USM Board of Regents Student Excellence Scholarship

We will be selecting one Freshman/Sophomore, Junior/Senior, and Graduate/Professional student across categories of academics, creativity, outreach, and leadership to receive the student scholarship. Applications will be submitted by students through a self-nomination process, and we are currently working on refining the rubric guidelines and application form to make it ready for release around November. We will also work with the Student Council to ensure this scholarship is advertised sufficiently across all campuses and hope that will further diversify the applicant pool. After review by the Board of Regents committee and verifying student disciplinary records, the final 12 recipients will be hosted for a ceremony at Hidden Waters.

Thank you, and I look forward to a wonderful term ahead.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vainavi Gambhir', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right above the name.

Vainavi Gambhir

President, University System of Maryland Student Council