



Report to the USM Board of Regents

Chancellor Jay A. Perman

University of Maryland, Baltimore | December 15, 2023

Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm deeply grateful to Gov. Moore for being with us this morning and sharing his priorities as we head into the legislative session. We appreciate his leadership and his friendship.

Speaking of the legislative session, I welcome to her first board meeting Susan Lawrence, our new vice chancellor for government relations. And I bid farewell to Vice Chancellor Tim McDonough, who actually interrupted his tenure at NACUBO to be with us today. Thank you, Tim.

As we close out another year together and prepare for the holiday break, my gift to all of you is the gift of brevity. This report should be my shortest of the year. That effort is helped by the fact that we met just a few weeks ago. Still, we have a lot of good news to celebrate.

I'll start with our host today, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). All of you who know me know how deeply I value partnership. It's something that UMB does especially well, as evidenced by the last few weeks.

- In partnership with Wexford Science + Technology, UMB added the last beam to 4MLK, an eight-story tower transforming not just UMB's BioPark but the entire gateway to West Baltimore.
- In partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), UMB is creating a \$4 million NIH accelerator to grow faculty-developed technologies in biomedicine and the life sciences.
- In partnership with Prince George's County Libraries, UMB's School of Nursing is bringing needed health resources to the community and providing students vital clinical experiences.
- In partnership with WJZ and the University of Maryland Medical Center, UMB brought Thanksgiving dinner to nearly 1,000 West Baltimore families, a long and beloved tradition in this neighborhood.
- And in partnership with the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)—the MPower partnership—UMB celebrated a top 20 ranking in the NSF's annual research survey, with combined expenditures of nearly \$1.23 billion, a one-year increase of \$86 million. President Jarrell, congratulations to you—and to your partners.

Elsewhere across the USM, Towson University announced a \$150 million renovation of Smith Hall, where TU will build a state-of-the-art communications hub—bringing communications, electronic media, and film together under one roof. The conversion is part of a massive effort to renovate or replace 1.3 million square feet of Towson’s campus, with investments totaling \$1.2 billion. Thank you, President Ginsberg.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) is also looking at growth, breaking ground on its Agricultural Research & Education Center. Supported with nearly \$10 million from the USDA and \$17 million from the state, the new building will provide a modern space for teaching, research, and extension, while supporting agribusiness and economic development.

And another piece of news just came in from UMES that I’m thrilled I get to break. The university just won nearly \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Education to establish a Futures Institute, accelerating UMES’s push to Research 1 status in the Carnegie Classification system. The grant will go toward recruiting faculty, doctoral students, scientists, and research mentors, all focused on three grand challenges—climate change, AI, and health care—and, specifically, on generating new knowledge in areas with documented gaps in research on the African-American experience. Congratulations, President Anderson.

At the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, a \$2 million award from NOAA will support a three-year project to explore how existing infrastructure like wastewater treatment plants could be used to mitigate global warming. It’s part of a White House initiative to support new ocean-based climate solutions. Congratulations, President Dennison.

Bowie State University’s (BSU) partnership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is paying dividends, as the group won federal dollars for conservation and restoration projects. Some of those dollars will support its work with BSU—developing curricula in environmental studies, providing students paid internships with the alliance, and building a pipeline of professionals of color in environmental and climate science. Thank you, President Breaux.

At UMBC, a team of researchers made the first-ever observation of a virus latching onto another virus as a means of entering the host organism and replicating its genetic material. The discovery was first published in the *Journal of the International Society for Microbial Ecology*. But the plot of this horror film was too good *not* to make it into the lay media, and the “vampire virus” was born. Further study promises to open up new avenues for antiviral therapy. Congratulations, President Sheares Ashby.

The University of Baltimore has been named an inaugural Host Partner for the Maryland Corps Program, Gov. Moore’s effort to strengthen Maryland’s workforce through service learning, volunteerism, and opportunities to match talent with need. It’s the administration’s keystone program proving that public service does, in fact, pay. Thank you, President Schmoke.

Coppin State University hosted TEDCO's Black Female Founders Forum, unpacking the unique—and uniquely tough—challenges that Black women face as entrepreneurs, especially in securing capital. And then, in a stroke of genius, VCs and investors were invited to the stage to put their money where their mouth is. Thank you, President Jenkins.

The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) is flexing its muscle in cybersecurity. UMGC hosted the CyberMaryland Annual Conference, joining academia, industry, and government in tackling the biggest challenges in cyber. For its efforts to build an inclusive cyber workforce, the university won Maryland's Cybersecurity Diversity Trailblazer Award. And UMGC's cybersecurity team continues to impress, with seven top 3 wins this year in national and global competitions. President Fowler, congratulations.

Frostburg State University was recognized by Phi Kappa Phi as a Circle of Excellence Silver Chapter. Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society spanning academic disciplines. This year, the university inducted 36 students, faculty, and alumni into the honor society, all guided by its motto: Let the love of learning rule humanity. Thank you, Vice President Delia.

Salisbury University (SU) President Lyn Lepre made many exciting announcements during her State of the University address: new academic programs in music therapy, engineering, and communications; a strategic innovation fund seeding projects that move SU forward, and, very exciting, plans to formalize a Graduate School at Salisbury and an Office of Research, setting the stage for growth—in students, in prominence, in rankings, in revenue. Congratulations, President Lepre.

Speaking of research, College Park has established an Office of Undergraduate Research, a universitywide enterprise to create a culture and community around undergraduate research and scholarship, and to open opportunities in discovery across departments. The university also just climbed into the nation's top 5 colleges for student entrepreneurship, as ranked by *The Princeton Review* and *Entrepreneur* magazine.

And, of course, we got news late last week that the Washington Commanders will move their business operations from FedEx Field to College Park's Discovery District. The move opens up so many opportunities for partnerships, internships, joint projects. It's a huge win—for the university and its students, but also for the team. Congratulations, President Pines.

At our regional higher education centers: The Universities at Shady Grove is giving out \$500 JumpStart Scholarships to all new students enrolling at USG this spring—an incentive that's been so effective in attracting local students and defraying their upfront costs. Speaking of attracting students, the USM at Southern Maryland (USMSM) hosted tri-county educators and employers for events reinforcing its mission to create “a workforce with staying power”—students who stay in Southern Maryland to complete their bachelor's degree and invest their skills and

earning power back into the communities that raised them. And, Eileen, I saw the great TEDCO piece on how state investments in Southern Maryland's AeroPark Innovation District will advance the pioneering work in autonomous technologies taking place at USMSM.

The USM at Hagerstown hosted its biggest fundraising event of the year—the annual Feaste & Frolic celebration—raising nearly \$100,000 for student scholarships. The center's first executive director, David Warner, was “knighted” at the event for his lifelong dedication to higher ed in the region. Dr. Khademian, Dr. Abel, Dr. Ashby, thank you.

I have one more achievement to mention—this one out of the USM Office for Academic and Student Affairs. Dr. Nancy Shapiro and her team won \$4 million from the U.S. Department of Education to build and train a cadre of peer mentors who will help new students—especially underserved students—navigate their first year of college by connecting them with the resources already available on our campuses: writing centers, math centers, mental health services, academic support services, and all those spaces, activities, and programs that nurture a sense of belonging, of community and connection. The project is based on work we did with Baltimore City students and includes all USM universities. Congratulations to everyone involved in the project.

In closing, as we look to a New Year—one we hope will bring peace and joy—I thank you for your work and what it means. In my holiday message, I said that education is our greatest act of optimism; that every day, we gather together—a resilient community of optimists—to prove that there is a better way forward and to light the path for others.

The fact that you join me in this work—that you, too, have faith in our power to bring light to the darkness—makes me very proud and very grateful.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.

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