

Friday, November 13, 2020
Report to the USM Board of Regents
Chancellor Jay Perman
AS DRAFTED

Thank you, Chair Gooden. And let me once again commend you and the regents for your hard work under these very difficult circumstances. As the academic year progresses, and COVID-19 escalates, we face grave challenges. This board has remained deeply engaged as we work together to meet those challenges. I thank you.

Let me also thank Dr. Nancy Shapiro, associate vice chancellor for education and outreach, and our student leaders for their presentation—and their impressive work—in civic engagement. It's been gratifying to see so many students Systemwide so deeply invested in our democratic process.

As Chair Gooden mentioned, this year was indeed historic in terms of voter turnout—especially among our young people—and, of course, it was historic, as well, for the election of Kamala Harris as vice president. I do hope now is the time we might all work together to advance the causes we care about as Americans.

I echo Chair Gooden's comments on Regent Bobby Neall, who has announced his retirement as Maryland Secretary of Health, effective next month. Regent Neall has been an invaluable asset to the state and to the University System, and I'm delighted that his service on this board will continue.

While it's been only a few weeks since we last met, there's been no shortage of notable developments across the System.

The **University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM)**, the state's oldest—and the System's newest—regional higher education center, will soon welcome its inaugural e

Today is also the first board meeting for Dr. Larry Leak as interim president of the **University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)**. In a distinguished career spanning five decades, Dr. Leak has been a mainstay of Maryland education, serving as a high school teacher and principal, university professor and administrator, assistant state superintendent of schools, college trustee, and gubernatorial appointee. As you know, after successfully leading UMGC for the past eight years, Javier Miyares has transitioned into an advisory capacity, focusing on Systemwide data analytics and how to better position the USM for distance education during and after the pandemic. I know Larry's transparent and collaborative leadership style will serve UMGC well, as Regent Sam Malhotra chairs the search committee for the university's next president.

There's no other way to start the body of my remarks today than with the devastating news of COVID's spike in Maryland and across the nation. We're all acutely aware of the deteriorating numbers in terms of infections, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and—yes—deaths. Maryland has seen several consecutive days with more than 1,000 new cases reported, and our positivity rate has crossed the 5 percent mark for the first time since June.

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itself. I'm so impressed with the engagement and accomplishment of our research faculty. And, through it all, state and local health departments were our constant collaborators and guides.

Of course, we hope for a spring semester starting January 25 that looks very much like our fall—some classes online-only, some in-person, and some hybrid, with face-to-face instruction supplementing online work. Campus de

In other grant news, UMBC received a three-year, \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to create the Maryland New Venture Fellowship for Cybersecurity. The fellowship will support the development of cybersecurity companies in Maryland, and will increase connections among technologists, mentors, and faculty at institutions across the state. In addition, NASA awarded a UMBC team \$1.4 million to develop artificial intelligence that improves how computers process climate data from satellites. And UMBC researchers have received a nearly \$150,000 planning grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study how telemedicine can be scaled more effectively, including to meet the complex training needs of medical professionals.

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Towson University has received \$1 million from former physics professor and department chair Dr. Eddie Loh, who retired from TU in 2010 after more than 40 years of teaching. This is the largest planned faculty gift in the university's history and will fund scholarships for TU physics students.

During an informal—and socially distanced—reception at the UMES Engineering and Aviation Science Complex, President Heidi Anderson accepted a \$10,000 gift from ASRC Federal to support the engineering and aviation sciences program. ASRC Federal is a prime contractor at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, where UMES students get hands-on experience and job opportunities.

The **University System of Maryland at Hagerstown's (USMH)** second annual Spirit Run—held virtually due to the pandemic—attracted 128 participants from across the country who ran (or walked) and raised nearly \$10,000 for scholarships.

It's gratifying for me to see that—especially in these stressful and difficult times—our universities and centers continue to engage in the communities around them. For example, UMB has entered into a partnership with Comcast to sponsor one year of internet connectivity for up to 1,000 families with children in 14 West Baltimore schools. UB is joining the Virtual Maryland College Application Campaign to increase the number of first-generation, low-income, and other underrepresented students in higher education. And UMBC re-enrolled 123 “near-completers” through its Finish Line initiative this semester. The students are taking advantage of the increased availability of online courses to finish

