

dedicated service to the System and to our universities, and I wish him the very best in his exciting new role.

I thank Nan Mulqueen, director of executive communications, for taking on the interim vice chancellorship, and Senior Vice Chancellor Ellen Herbst for steering the USM marketing and branding campaign until we find Tim's successor.

THE STRENGTH OF OUR SYSTEM

Now let me pivot to the excellence of our universities. I want to start with a few of our universities _____, because I think that's when we're at our best. President Biden announced last month that, from a pool of 400 applications, the Greater Baltimore Region has been named one of 31 Federal Tech Hubs. The Baltimore consortium that pursued this designation includes UMB, Coppin State University (CSU), Towson University, and UMBC. And the hub exploits one of the System's particular strengths: artificial intelligence as it intersects with biotechnology, emphasizing personalized medicine and predictive health.

This designation promises billions of dollars in investment—federal and otherwise. It promises to catalyze economic growth, technology innovation, and equitable opportunity. It promises to revolutionize human health and wellness. I thank everyone who worked to bring this opportunity home.

And then we just got _____ win 48 hours ago: The consolidated FBI headquarters are coming to Greenbelt. _____ contributed to this. To lure the agency to Maryland, nearly all of our universities have volunteered their research capabilities in dozens of FBI domains and their capacity to supply and train the FBI workforce.

Breaking down cost of attendance, it shows that for in-state students attending a Maryland public university, average tuition and fees are right in the middle—25th most expensive—among all 50 states. It puts us below the national average in terms of cost and below our more expensive neighbors—Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware.

We don't always celebrate a rank that places us in the middle of the pack. But we've worked very hard—with our leaders in Annapolis—to reduce our cost of attendance. And this ranking proves it. The fact that we offer an exceptional education at an affordable price—the fact that we're working every day to open access to even more students—makes me very proud.

UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

Now, to our individual universities. I was excited to join Coppin State last month as leaders cut the ribbon on their new College of Business. The \$45 million facility—the first new building to open at Coppin since 2015—will be a hub for business education in Baltimore and a catalyst for university growth and community development. As I said at the ribbon-cutting, it's an investment in the next generation of students who will remake not only we do business in America, but does that business.

In addition, CSU announced a \$1 million U.S. Department of Education grant to train teachers to boost reading, math, and social-emotional outcomes for children with disabilities. And honoring its commitment to make an HBCU education affordable for any U.S. student without easy access to a historically Black institution, Coppin inked a transfer agreement with the Colorado Community College System and offered graduating two-year students in-state tuition rates. Congratulations, President Jenkins.

UMD affirmed its status as the Capital of Quantum this fall with the

Green has won \$1.2 million to study cellular pathways involved in cancer and neurodegenerative diseases; and Dr. Vandana Janeja will partner with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) on a \$1 million grant using high-performance computing to understand—and predict—critical changes in the environment.

Speaking of which, last month, UMCES hosted more than 150 leaders in science, industry, government, and nonprofits to launch a collaboratory focused on harnessing big data and advanced cyberinfrastructure to tackle environmental challenges. UMCES's Chesapeake Global Collaboratory is what they call a "think and do tank" to shape environmental action that's improved by more people, deeper data, and better technology—producing science that's more nimble, transparent, and democratic.

And with Gov. Moore, UMCES has announced that 1.7 billion juvenile oysters have been planted in the Chesapeake Bay this year, surpassing the initial 2023 goal and setting a new record. Oysters contributing to the restoration of tributaries are grown primarily at UMCES's Horn Point Lab, one of the largest hatcheries on the East Coast. Congratulations, President Dennison.

UMGC renewed its transfer partnership with the College of Southern Maryland, one of UMG's largest transfer partners. Reaching outside Maryland, a new agreement allows students in the Wisconsin Technical College System—a system of

I know we all have strong feelings about what happened on Oct. 7, and what's been happening every day since. I know each of us is shaped by who we are, by our life experiences, by our lived history and that of our loved ones—those here today and our ancestors.

That said, I am committed—this System is committed—to our people; that they feel safe no matter who they are. And what that requires is dialogue, community, connection. It requires civility, even when— when—that feels so difficult. It requires that we engage with