



# USM Updates

From Chancellor Robert L. Caret

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## October 2017

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As the academic year progresses, the University System of Maryland (USM) continues to make impressive strides. There has been excellent news in the national rankings of our institutions. We have welcomed new leadership to our Board of Regents and on our campuses. We have dedicated new facilities that will have a significant impact going forward. We have received major grants that will advance education and discovery, while also bolstering the USM's economic impact. I am pleased to update you on these and other activities across the USM.

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### USM Institutions

- [Bowie State University](#)
- [Coppin State University](#)
- [Frostburg State University](#)
- [Salisbury University](#)
- [Towson University](#)
- [University of Baltimore](#)
- [University of Maryland, Baltimore](#)

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### **NATIONAL RANKINGS HIGHLIGHT NATIONAL EMINENCE**

USM institutions continue to distinguish themselves as among the nation's very best.

[Forbes Magazine's "America's Top -Colleges"](#)- with rankings based on tuition costs, school quality, graduation success, and post-grad earnings- included four USM institutions: the University of

[University of Maryland,  
Baltimore County](#)

[University of Maryland,  
College Park](#)

[University of Maryland  
Eastern Shore](#)

[University of Maryland  
University College](#)

[University of Maryland  
Center for Environmental  
Science](#)

[Universities at Shady  
Grove](#)

[University System of  
Maryland at Hagerstown](#)

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Maryland, College Park (UMCP), the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), Towson University (TU), and Salisbury University (SU).

[MONEY Magazine's list of "Best Value Colleges"](#)- based on 24 factors in the categories of educational quality, affordability, and alumni success-recognized six USM campuses: UMCP, which was ranked 11th among public universities and 20th overall, Towson, Salisbury, UMBC, Bowie State University (BSU), and Frostburg State University (FSU).

College Choice, a leading authority in college and university rankings and resources, published a ranking of the [50 Best Historically Black Colleges and Universities for 2017](#). BSU, Coppin State University (CSU), and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) all ranked in the top 35.

And in the just-released [U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges Rankings](#): UMCP was ranked among the top 25 in national public universities; UMBC was ranked the 7th most innovative school; Towson, Salisbury, and Frostburg were all ranked in the top 40 in the Regional Universities North / Top Public Schools category; and UMES, Bowie, and Coppin were all ranked in the top 50 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In numerous other rankings- *Fiske Guide to Colleges*, *The Washington Monthly's* "Best

College Guide," *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, and others- you will find literally every USM degree-granting institution recognized.

You can access a full list of current USM rankings [here](#).

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## ■ NEW LEADERSHIP

With the new academic year, the USM welcomed two new regents. Joining the Board are Katrina Dennis, a cum laude graduate of the University of Baltimore (UB) School Of Law and a partner in the Baltimore office of the law firm Saul Ewing LLP, and student-regent Will Shorter, a current UB student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.

USM has also welcomed two new presidents recently. On July 1st, Dr. Aminta Breaux assumed the presidency at Bowie State University, where she has already placed a strong emphasis on growing enrollment and expanding business partnerships. On September 18th, Dr. Peter Goodwin became president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), building on the impressive legacy of Don Boesch, who led UMCES for the past 27 years.

I am also pleased to note that on July 24th, business innovator David Wise joined the USM as director of the Maryland Momentum Fund, a \$25 million fund to support startups formed within the system's 12 institutions and its incubators.

On a more somber note, Salisbury University President Janet Dudley-Eshbach announced that she will step down from her role as president effective June 30, 2018. Whether it be accommodating growing enrollment, raising academic standards, meeting key workforce needs, or expanding community service efforts, under the leadership of President Dudley-Eshbach, SU today stands as a Maryland university of national distinction.

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### ■ IMPACTFUL NEW FACILITIES

This past summer, BSU cut the ribbon on an impressive new Center for Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Nursing. This \$100 million complex has the potential to be truly transformative for BSU. It features flexible classrooms with technology to support interactive, collaborative learning, cutting-edge labs to support research, a state-of-the-art nursing simulation wing, and more, all in a facility designed to meet LEED Gold certification standards for building sustainability.

Shortly thereafter, in a joint dedication and groundbreaking ceremony at UMCP, we celebrated a project that will vault UMCP's venerable Cole Field House into the future, with a cutting-edge research facility, space dedicated to innovation and entrepreneurship, and athletic training facilities unmatched in Division I sports. I am especially pleased to note that this project was developed in part through *MPower*, the structured collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and UMCP. Launched

just five years ago, and enhanced last year through the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act, *MPower* seeks to unite the complementary resources and strengths of these two great institutions.

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## **GRANTS TO EXPAND ■ KNOWLEDGE AND INTENSIFY USM'S IMPACT**

USM institutions continue to receive significant grants to advance the twin causes of education and academic discovery.

Towson will receive \$1 million over five years from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as part of its inaugural Inclusive Excellence Initiative, aimed at enhancing undergraduate, minority student success in the STEM disciplines. TU's Fisher College of Science and Mathematics has seen an 84 percent increase in minority student majors since 2012.

With a three-year, \$400,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, Bowie is developing an interactive cybersecurity simulator to teach minority students how to combat real-world threats, as they train to fill critical gaps in the nation's cybersecurity workforce. In addition, Bowie and UMCP are teaming up on a \$1.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to train undergraduate students from underrepresented populations for doctoral study.

UMCP received several other grants this past summer, including a five-year, \$6

million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to develop a novel vaccine to prevent hepatitis C virus infection; a \$3.3 million grant from ED to conduct research aimed at helping children improve their language skills; and a \$1.2 million NSF grant to advance research on how human neural and cognitive systems interact and intersect with advances in engineering, computer science, and education.

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### ■ **TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF USM'S "SYSTEMNESS"**

Once again, I close this update with some news reflecting the emphasis we have placed on the USM's work **as a system**. This "systemness"- working together, leveraging our resources, and using economies of scale- strengthens our ability to have a broad-based, positive impact.

The USM's Baltimore Power- or B-Power-initiative aimed at increasing educational and career opportunities for city students continues to make strides forward. Coppin has joined with Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh to help make a college education more affordable for graduates of Baltimore City Public High Schools. In August, Coppin announced 2018 plans to offer qualifying Baltimore City Public High School graduates, who also graduate with an associate's degree from Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), free tuition for two years at Coppin State University. This plan builds on the mayor's plan to offer free community college for Baltimore public high school graduates. UB's efforts to expand educational opportunities for

city students received a significant boost from The Shelter Foundation, which has committed to fund as many as six scholarships for full-time, city-based students who are newly enrolled at UB. This need-based program is available for qualified incoming students, with special consideration provided to those who are part of UB's Dual Enrollment program.

With USM's leadership, the Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST) initiative- which creates opportunities for faculty to use available open educational resources (OER) in place of-textbooks- continues to expand its impact. To date, 66 courses at 14 institutions across Maryland have switched to OER, impacting more than 3,800 students and saving them \$141 per course on average. Total cumulative cost savings to students is estimated to be \$1.6 million in three short years. To increase the impact of MOST, a Mini-Grant Program was launched last spring, with a potential additional impact of \$1.3 million in textbook savings for approximately 8,000 more students in Maryland this Fall. In addition, the Maryland Textbook Cost Savings Act, passed by the state legislature in 2017, will provide support needed to further scale and sustain our support of faculty willing to adopt low-cost instructional materials across all public higher institutions across the state.

I also want to take a moment to highlight a few other areas where our emphasis on "systemness" came to the forefront and served the USM and our institutions very

well. After the events in Charlottesville, the system and our campuses stepped up almost immediately, and with one voice, reaffirmed our commitment to the core values of diversity and inclusion, fairness and justice, and safety and security.

Through this emphasis, we enable and foster the process of free inquiry, free speech, and open debate that lies at the heart of any academic enterprise.

Likewise, when the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program came under threat, the USM and our campuses were unified in our actions. Virtually the entire Maryland higher education community came together to reach out to the Maryland Congressional delegation, voicing our support for legislation to codify DACA. I thank our campuses and campus leadership for their efforts.

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#### ■ CONTACT ME

I would very much appreciate hearing from you. If you would like to respond to this letter or any other USM news, please write me at: [chancellorletter@usmd.edu](mailto:chancellorletter@usmd.edu).

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**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
*of* **MARYLAND**