



USM Updates

From Chancellor Robert L. Caret

February 2016

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[University of Maryland,](#)

Greetings and welcome to my first University System of Maryland (USM) Chancellor's newsletter. Through these periodic communications, I will provide brief updates on USM activities, achievements, and initiatives related to our strategic priorities: enhancing quality, advancing college completion, growing the workforce and the economy, and improving efficiency.



GETTING TO KNOW MARYLAND EVEN BETTER

It's been an eventful seven months-plus for the USM since I returned to Maryland as chancellor July 1, 2015. As many of you know, my roots here run deep. For more than three decades, I served at Towson University, as a faculty member, dean, executive vice president, provost, and, from 2003 to 2011, as president.

Early on, I announced two parallel efforts to reacquaint myself with my adopted home. In mid-October I took a [statewide tour](#). Over four days and traveling more than 900 miles, I met with literally hundreds of Marylanders. I spoke with elected officials, business leaders and entrepreneurs, farmers, educators, community activists, and others. We had candid discussions about USM's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for new partnerships to meet both regional and statewide needs together. These conversations are helping to shape my ideas and actions going forward, especially in terms of the USM's critical role in student success, job creation, and economic growth.

Also last fall, I began a series of visits to each USM

[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](#)

institution to meet with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and others to explore how we can work together as a *system* even more effectively. With more than half of these campus visits complete, I can report that the meetings have been mutually informative as we've discussed USM's strategic priorities. I certainly have benefitted from wide-ranging feedback.

The statewide tour and the campus visits have highlighted the direct impact that the USM has on the lives of people statewide and beyond.

■ SUPPORTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

In early February, I testified enthusiastically before the Maryland General Assembly in support of Governor Larry Hogan's FY 2017 budget proposal for the USM. The proposal is prudent, tightly balanced, and very positive for the system and the many constituencies that we serve, and for our state. If approved by the legislature, the budget will enable the system to maintain its commitment to quality, access, and affordability; hold the tuition increase for in-state, undergraduate students to 2 percent; and meet mandatory cost increases. In addition, it will provide \$6.8 million for enhancement funding projects to help the USM and the state meet our mutual goal of greater college completion.

For more details on the budget proposal, please review [my testimony](#). And I ask you to voice your support as well as talk with your colleagues and associates in support of this budget.

■ WELCOMING NEW LEADERSHIP ACROSS USM

The USM community is pleased to welcome [D'Ana E. Johnson](#), the newest member of the USM Board of Regents. A resident of Anne Arundel County, she is a partner with the firm of Bonner, Kiernan, Trebach & Crociata in Washington, D.C. Regent Johnson replaces Louise Gonzalez, who served with distinction during her just-completed term.

Since the current academic year began, we've welcomed two new presidents. On July 1, 2015, Coppin State University welcomed [President Maria Thompson](#), who is already putting to work her strong commitment to preparing graduates who are analytical, socially responsible, lifelong learners. And in January 2016, [Kim Schatzel](#) joined Towson University as its new president; she brings a unique combination of higher education leadership and corporate experience.

We also will welcome [Ronald Nowaczyk](#) on May 9 as the new president of Frostburg State University. Currently provost and vice president of academic affairs at Clarion University, he has dedicated his career to helping universities in rural areas succeed academically and as partners to surrounding communities.

■ FOCUSING ON DIVERSITY

As on campuses nationwide, USM's institutional communities are engaged increasingly in candid conversations about diversity and inclusion. Late last year, USM Board of Regents Chair James L. Shea formed the board's [Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion](#). The group is working to engage faculty, staff, students, and administrators in open dialogue; recommend best practices and strategies to improve diversity and inclusion across the system; and provide general guidance to USM institutions on these issues. I look forward to keeping you apprised of the group's progress.

■ HIGHLIGHTING NATIONAL EMINENCE

USM's academic excellence is on full display, notably in the most recent rankings issued by *U.S. News & World Report*:

- * The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) ranked 19th among national public universities and climbed five spots to 57th overall.
- * Towson University ranked 12th and Salisbury University (SU) 18th in the Public Schools - Regional Universities (North) category.
- * Both Bowie State University (BSU) and the University Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) ranked in the top 30 of Historically Black Institutions.
- * And the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) ranked 4th in the nation-joining MIT and Stanford in the top five in the new ranking of the "Most Innovative Schools" and 6th in the nation--tied with Yale and ahead of Stanford and Duke--for commitment to undergraduate teaching.

A more comprehensive list of USM rankings can be viewed [here](#).

■ ENSURING RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

With the implementation of the Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) initiative more than a decade ago, the USM established itself as a national model for responsible cost cutting and cost containment in higher

education. To date, this systematic reengineering of our academic and administrative processes has resulted in direct savings of more than \$500 million.

With the launch of [E&E 2.0](#), the USM is taking this effort to the next level. At the system level we are spearheading the systemwide use of analytics to improve both academic and business processes. We are also removing bureaucratic obstacles to efficiency, leveraging contracts, and developing a funding guideline model that provides greater funding equity and adequacy across the range of USM institutions. Activities at the campus level include achieving greater cost savings, strategically reallocating existing resources, and targeting non-tuition funding streams.

Further evidence of the success of our exemplary stewardship came earlier this year when the three principal bonds ratings agencies--Standard & Poor's, Moody's, and Fitch--assigned extremely [favorable debt ratings](#) to the USM. These ratings of AA+ or Aa1 will save the USM millions of dollars in interest costs.

COMPETING SUCCESSFULLY FOR GRANTS, CONTRACTS

USM funding for research and other activities from external sources reached nearly [\\$1.3 billion in FY 2015](#), an increase of 7.2 percent over FY 2014. The USM received almost 10,000 awards from the federal government, Maryland state agencies, non-profit foundations, and corporations to support research, education, and public service activities.

The USM's success in effectively competing for grants and contracts has continued in FY 2016:

- * The USM Office was awarded a [four-year, \\$3 million grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Education under the First in the World grant program. Five USM institutions are partnering with seven community colleges to develop new math pathways to reduce developmental education and increase college retention and completion.
- * At UMBC, the Joint Center for Earth Systems Technology (JCET) renewed its collaborative [agreement with NASA Goddard](#), bringing approximately \$46 million to the JCET program and UMBC over the next five years.
- * The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) School of Social Work received notification of [five federal grants](#) totaling more than \$40 million to enhance the well-being of people ranging from children and adolescents to middle-aged men.
- * At UMES, a trio of researchers has secured nearly [\\$1.2 million in grants](#) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to support their research projects.
- * And more recently, the [Maryland Language Science](#)

[Center](#) at UMCP has received a five-year, \$3 million National Science Foundation grant to develop a new model for training the next generation of language science Ph.D. students.

■ LET ME HEAR FROM YOU

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.



Forward this email

STAY CONNECTED

