

Beginning with COVID-19 . . .

As Chair Gooden mentioned, from the earliest stages she has stressed that frequent and open communication is absolutely essential to effectively managing institutional instruction and systemwide operations during this period. There is no question that following through on that priority has helped keep everyone on the same page with regard to policies and protocols.

The Board of Regents has held nine special meetings over the past ten weeks. And I know that system office leadership, campus leadership, faculty, staff, and students, and members of the media and general public have joined us on those calls. Along with these, I have held conference calls with all university presidents and regional center directors several times a week and essentially daily conversations with my senior staff.

While it has been only a matter of weeks, the steps we have taken together have been significant.

Early on we acted to recall USM students studying abroad and advise international students attending our institutions, we worked to discourage large gatherings and employee travel, and we implemented distance-learning for students and telework for employees.

As we continued to address the impacts of the pandemic, we worked with the institutions to develop an unified approach for the refund of costs associated with room and board and certain student fees, we restricted research that was not related to the novel coronavirus, and we made the difficult decision to postpone in-person commencement ceremonies.

Moving now to news from USM institutions . . .

As I mentioned,

I will start with **Bowie State University (BSU)**. So President Aminta Breaux, where there is no shortage of impressive news.

At the 2020 HBCU Grow LEAD Conference

President Breaux

The **University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)** has been demonstrating tremendous leadership addressing COVID challenges. Faculty experts from the School of Public Health are keeping Americans informed through various media outlets and working with regional leaders in their responses. Researchers from the School of Engineering have produced hand sanitizer, developed hands-free, 3D-printed door latches, and are exploring the possibility of sterilizing N95 respirators and other personal protective equipment for reuse. In other news, Maryland Energy Innovation Institute will lead the U.S. side of a five-year, \$18.4 million U.S.-Israel Energy Center award from the Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation. The award will support development of lithium and sodium metal solid-state batteries for advanced energy storage. And in the *U.S. News* graduate school rankings, UMCP has more than three dozen schools, colleges, and programs featured in the rankings, including programs from engineering, business, education, and public policy.

At the **University of Baltimore (UB)**, five School of Law alumni were included among those honored in . In addition, Sharon Glazer, professor and chair of the Division of Applied Behavioral Sciences, has been named a Fellow of the Society for business, education,

Regional Centre of Expertise recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

One last high

(USMF). The COVID-19 pandemic created an urgent need for emergency funds for students and at many campuses and existing student emergency funds were depleted in a matter of days in mid-March. Recognizing this urgency, the USM Foundation contributed \$10,000 to each campus and regional center for a total donation of \$150,000. It also asked its board to contribute individually cy fund giving link on its website and through social media. I want to thank Leonard Raley, Vice Chancellor for Advancement and President and CEO of the USMF.

I turn now to the recently completed legislative session . . .

Obviously, many of the actions that took place in Annapolis especially in term of budgetary decisions are facing significant revisions and reductions. This, of course, includes funding for the USM. I will have more to say on that in just a moment. But I think it is important to note a couple of points that are pertinent regardless of any revisions.

First, when the size and scope of the pandemic began to make itself clear, the legislature working in tandem with Governor Hogan acted swiftly and decisively to make significant funding available **immediately** to address the outbreak of coronavirus. That vision and leadership was important and clearly beneficial to the state. Leadership in Annapolis deserve our thanks.

Second, while the level of state funding supporting the USM will almost certainly be reduced, thanks to several years of the working closely with legislative leaders, aligning USM priorities with those of the state, and the hard work of so many professionals both at the campus level and in the system office the USM will be addressing any funding reductions from a position of strength. We are seen as an investment more than an expense, and that will serve us well going forward.

And so, for this most recent legislative session and the cumulative impact of the past several sessions, I thank Vice Chancellor for Government Relations Patrick Hogan, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Government Relations Andy Clark, and their campus-based government relations colleagues throughout the USM. I also thank the presidents, vice presidents, and other leaders who have worked in support of both their individual institutions and the system as a whole. And I want to thank Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Joann Boughman and her team, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Ellen Herbst and her staff, and the entire USM office. I am proud of all of you and proud of the work we have done together.

Lastly, looking at our financial position going forward . . .

We have several variables to estimate and manage as we go forward. The uncertainties we face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic impact our students, faculty, and staff and will inevitably have negative impacts on our financial position.

We need to prepare for the tough decisions ahead of us we will need to make hard choices regarding our funding sources and the use of our funds. Believe me: Tough decisions are coming. As we continue to gather information, project various scenarios, and continue the planning process, I will keep everyone fully informed.

But I also know that keeping our staff and faculty employed possible is