

Friday, December 18, 2020
Report to the USM Board of Regents
Chancellor Jay Perman
AS DRAFTED

Thank you, Chair Gooden. And let me once again thank all of you for your efforts on behalf of the

Earlier this week, we received news that philanthropist MacKenzie Scott is making transformative gifts to **Bowie State University** (BSU) and the **University of Maryland Eastern Shore** (UMES), two of Maryland's preeminent Historically Black Institutions. The gifts—\$25 million to Bowie State and \$20 million to UMES—are among the largest unrestricted gifts ever awarded to an institution within the USM. This incredible generosity is particularly meaningful now, in the midst of a pandemic that disproportionately harms students of color, students in poverty, and first-generation students. Bowie State and UMES are national leaders in advancing education equity, and they have long graduated students who are a source of strength to the state and the region. These gifts will allow the universities to increase financial aid for students, invest in academic programs and innovations, and expand the

resources. In addition, UMCES launched its first edX professional certificate course—Science for Environmental Management. The course will help UMCES develop the next generation of scientists, business leaders, policymakers, and educators who are better equipped to meet environmental

And, finally, across the System, our USM family and friends came out in force to support students facing financial hardship during COVID. Donations poured into the institutions' student emergency funds, and by year's end, those donations totaled \$2.4 million Systemwide. This generosity among our friends is such a blessing.

In other business, I have the [USM's 2020 Annual Report](#) to share with you.

As you'll recall, last June I delivered a report that focused on the recently concluded academic year, highlighting institutional accomplishments across the System. Today, I have the pleasure of presenting the USM's full Annual Report, outlining our Systemwide success.

The progress we've made in priority areas is clearly and concisely conveyed. The report highlights our commitment to access and affordability as well as quality and completion. It also showcases the USM's impact on workforce development, company creation, and economic growth. In addition, it outlines our efforts to create a culture of philanthropy, promote sustainability, practice good financial stewardship, and foster equity, inclusion, and civic engagement. The report is available online right now, but once it's printed, I'll make sure everyone gets a copy.

Regents, as we close out 2020, with two COVID vaccines having now secured FDA approval, I know we're filled with hope that this is, indeed, the beginning of the end of this pandemic. At the same time, we know we have several more difficult months ahead of us, and, as COVID cases and deaths spike, we must continue our fight to end this virus and keep our people safe.

Without question, the USM is **deeply** engaged in this fight.

Just yesterday, the COVID vaccine developed by Moderna and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases gained FDA approval for emergency use. This is a milestone for the world, yes, but it's also a milestone for us—for the University System.

UMBC alumna Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett and her colleague Dr. Barney Graham led the team of scientists at NIAID who helped develop the Moderna vaccine. When asked about the involvement of Black scientists in vaccine development, Dr. Anthony Fauci proudly acknowledged Dr. Corbett. Is there any more powerful endorsement of our educational mission?

Our involvement with the Moderna vaccine doesn't stop with Dr. Corbett. The School of Medicine at UMB led clinical trials of the vaccine to determine safety and efficacy, enabling its quick approval—and saving countless lives.

Dr. Jarrell marked his first day as UMB president by taking part in the vaccine trial—to show his confidence in the vaccine and to set an example for those who might be skeptical of it.

Dr. Hrabowski and his wife Jacqueline also took part in the trial—expressly to highlight the urgent need for African Americans, Latinx, and other people of color to participate in medical studies.

Without doubt, there is justified distrust of a vaccine among communities of color. This nation's history of medical research, and medical interventions, on Black and Brown people, on Indigenous people, is appalling. But these are the very communities that are being disproportionately harmed by COVID. These are the very people we need to save. There's simply no alternative.

I'd have you look at the System's institutional leadership. Of 12 USM presidents, more than half are

We have deep expertise in, for instance, data tracking and forecasting, public health policy, vaccine development, bio-production, quantum computing, supply chain solutions. We have what the region and the nation need to help prevent what we've just been through these past 10 months, and we're leveraging that expertise every day.

And we're applying what we know close to home, too—mining decades of scholarly leadership in how to control disease spread, but also applying the on-the-ground experience we gained by resuming on-campus instruction this semester.

At our last meeting, I mentioned our lessons learned document. The COVID project managers on each campus are now synthesizing the changes they'll make next spring based on how they did this fall.

I'd be disingenuous if I didn't acknowledge that that the biggest issue come spring will be testing. We're investigating a rapid-return, self-administered test that would allow for more frequent testing and easier capture of a positive result through the infection cycle.

It would allow for routine testing of all students on campus (vs. surveillance samples), and it positions us for faster catch-and-release from quarantine, which is good for everyone.

Yesterday, we had more than 2,200 new COVID cases in Maryland. I don't believe we can look at this surge and go about business as usual.

Our universities were **never** bubbles unto themselves. The conditions in the communities surrounding our institutions have everything to do with the conditions on campus. And those community conditions are deteriorating.

And I'll say one more thing: I think we can confidently project that, with new CDC leadership under the Biden Administration—with Dr. Rochelle Walensky in charge—there will be an expectation of more robust testing at U.S. universities.

I look forward to updating you on our testing plans at our next meeting.

So, yes, we have another difficult semester in front of us. But with a vaccine in mass distribution by late spring or early summer, I'm optimistic for a fall that looks closer to what we know.

But, at the same time, we've learned so much from this experience—how to optimize remote instruction, how to adapt courses for online delivery, how to meet the needs of our students in a way that honors their differences.

We cannot let all the progress we've made in access and innovation languish should on-campus instruction once again become the norm. Instead, we should strive to integrate our strategies, platforms, and resources for both on-campus and online learning. That's how you emerge from a crisis stronger, more agile, and more resilient.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report.