

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) is adding Digital Media Studies to its undergraduate majors beginning this fall. Additionally, technology giant Apple has enlisted UMES as a Community Center for Coding and Creativity, meaning the institution will expand its curriculum to provide instruction in programming languages for Apple's X-code platform.

A \$1.5 million gift from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to the UMCP School of Public Health will support efforts to prepare a new generation of public health leaders to confront emerging challenges, including pandemics, systemic racism, and the climate crisis.

And as part of an innovative program to support HBCUs across the country, Diageo North America has donated \$250,000 to establish a permanent endowed scholarship fund at Bowie State. The fund will support talented students, develop future leaders, and help shape a more equitable society.

Excellence and leadership, which have come to define USM institutions and their people, can also be found in abundance.

Two UMCES scientists have been named 2021–22 Fulbright Scholars. Associate Professor Lora Harris will use her award to work in Finland on questions of estuarine ecology. Meanwhile, PhD candidate Christina Goethel will use her award to support postdoctoral research and teaching in Iceland. As UMCES President Peter Goodwin noted, having Fulbright Scholars this year is a testament to the impact of the center's work.

The Fulbright honors don't stop with UMCES. UMCP was named a Top Producer of Fulbright scholars, with six awards. And the USM has three Top Producers of Fulbright UMCP,

Turning to the USM's vision for the future, I'm pleased to share that our strategic planning process is now fully underway. The board's Strategic Planning Work Group—chaired by Regent Gonella and working closely with Huron Consulting—will gather input from the USM community and an expansive set of

Let me close with one final observation. My testimony earlier this month before the House and Senate subcommittees was actually my second time this session formally addressing members of the General Assembly.

The day before, on the floor of the Maryland Senate, the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership—the initiative between UMB and UMCP—was recognized for reaching a significant milestone. The NSF has officially linked UMB and UMCP as one research enterprise. And with \$1.1 billion in R&D expenditures, that single enterprise—the University of Maryland—now ranks 8th among the nation's public research universities and 14th overall. Maryland now joins a handful of elite G(s)tuawe-iv