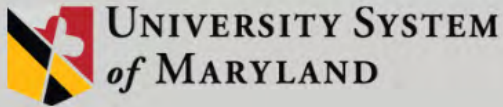


**JUNE 2022**

## CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

FROM JAY A. PERMAN



### **The Incredible Class of 2022**

Last month, the USM's 12 universities awarded more than 40,000 undergraduate and graduate degrees at ceremonies across Maryland and—thanks to [UMGC](#)—around the world. It's the sixth-straight year that we've met this 40,000-degree benchmark.

These degrees are a huge part of Maryland's success in education attainment. Just over 40 percent of Maryland residents have at least a bachelor's degree, ranking us third in the nation. And USM universities are responsible for more than three-quarters of all bachelor's degrees conferred in the state.



*In commencement ceremonies across the state, USM universities conferred 40,000 degrees this year.*

These degrees also spotlight our vital role in supplying the most talented workforce in America. Roughly eight in 10 USM undergraduates are Maryland residents; they're the very students most likely

to remain in Maryland following graduation and contribute their expertise, skills, and service to the communities that brought them up.



*Four in every 10 Marylanders hold at least a bachelor's degree, making Maryland #3 nationwide in education attainment.*

This commencement season alone, the USM awarded 11,000 STEM degrees—nearly half to students of color—and 3,500 health care degrees. That's almost 15,000 nurses, cybersecurity specialists, physicians, engineers, and others ready to meet some of the greatest challenges of our age.

But the Class of '22 isn't a monolith. Behind those 40,000 degrees are 40,000 students who weathered a pandemic and the challenges that came with it. There's no denying that those challenges were huge: losing jobs, raising families, braving sickness, and suffering loss—all while adjusting to a new way of learning, one that traded physical proximity for virtual connection and one we'd never tried on a scale so large.

It was demanding—all of it. But while COVID might have disrupted our students' journeys, it did not—could not—derail their dreams. I thank the Class of 2022 for enduring with us, and showing us how tough they really are.



*Eighteen percent of Maryland residents have a graduate or professional degree, the second-highest percentage in the country.*



## Welcoming New Leaders

We're excited to welcome new university leaders to the USM family this summer.



*Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre becomes president of Salisbury University on July 15.*

[Carolyn Ringer Lepre](#) comes to Salisbury University having most recently served as interim president of Radford University in Virginia. I'm excited to welcome her to SU, to the Eastern Shore, and to Maryland.

Dr. Lepre's experience, priorities, and collaborative leadership style are a perfect fit for SU. She's committed to cultivating student success and understands the importance of upping enrollment—especially among first-generation and underrepresented students. She has a strong track record of partnering with business and industry, and expanding academic programs to meet urgent workforce needs. And she's a pro at fostering strong, mutually enriching engagement with local communities.

In short, Dr. Lepre understands the assignment. Her values as an educator and an administrator mirror those of SU. She knows Salisbury is a proudly student-centered university and an economic and cultural force on Maryland's Eastern Shore. She's eager to build on SU's reputation and raise its profile among America's very best comprehensive universities. I have to thank SU President Chuck Wight for giving Dr. Lepre such a solid foundation on which to build.

UMBC's next president, [Valerie Sheares Ashby](#), has been dean of Duke University's Trinity College of Arts & Sciences since 2015.

Dr. Sheares Ashby has the experience and attributes needed to grow UMBC's academic and research prominence, and she's steeped in the culture of inclusive excellence that has made UMBC a national exemplar of access, equity, and achievement. Over her years at Duke, she's excelled in recruiting and retaining talented and diverse faculty and deepening their relationship with administrators; supporting academic and curricular innovation; and bringing out the best in her students, who comprise 80 percent of Duke's entire undergraduate population.



*Dr. Valerie Sheares Ashby begins her tenure as UMBC president on Aug. 1.*

Dr. Sheares Ashby's long-held vision—one that will find a ready home at UMBC—is a three-pronged approach to excellence: excellence through diversity; excellence in teaching, research, and service; and excellence through leadership and mentoring. It's hard to imagine a better fit for the UMBC presidency.

Of course, Dr. Freeman Hrabowski's 30 years of leadership have made UMBC the extraordinary university it is today, and I'm excited to see how Dr. Sheares Ashby shapes its next chapter.

## **A Powerful Endorsement of Our Work**

There's no stronger endorsement of the work we do at the USM than the backing we win from Maryland's elected leaders. With generous support from Annapolis this legislative session, we will have a massive impact on the state's prosperity and the welfare of its people.



*To keep college affordable for Maryland students, the state has allocated \$20 million for need-based financial aid.*

The USM's FY23 operating budget fully restores the deep cuts we suffered early in the pandemic and provides millions of dollars in new money. Included in our budget is significant new funding for our three HBCUs—funding that will be applied to student scholarships, faculty recruitment, and academic innovation. Millions of dollars are targeted to support the operation of new and renovated facilities.

Money allocated for pay raises will help us attract and retain the faculty and staff who are the very people responsible for Maryland's unparalleled success in college attainment and quality. And, in a generous bid to help us keep college affordable for more Marylanders, \$20 million will go toward expanding need-based financial aid for our students.

Meanwhile, our capital budget is historic. The General Assembly approved every USM project included in the Governor's Capital Budget, committing more than \$500 million, the largest single-year capital appropriation ever for the USM. This funding allows us to expand education and research capacity across Maryland, and provide the state-of-the-art facilities that advance innovation and discovery.

All of this underscores how much our leaders in Annapolis value public higher education and how committed they are to investing in it. Together, we've built one of the most educated, most innovative, most entrepreneurial, and most successful populations in the country. I'm proud to serve a state that understands the power of education and puts its purse behind it.



And I'm proud of everything we've accomplished this year—our leaders, our faculty and staff, our friends, and above all, our students. I can't wait to see what we do next.

*Historic capital funding allows us to expand education and research capacity across the state, and build the facilities that advance innovation.*

Jay A. Perman  
Chancellor, University System of Maryland

