



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

January 20, 2021
Testimony on Senate Bill 1
Dr. Heidi M. Anderson, President, UMES

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee -

As the 16th President of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), on behalf of our UMES students, faculty, staff and 18,000 alumni, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and respectfully ask for your support to pass Speaker Sydnor's bill, SB 1, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)-Funding.

I also wish to take a moment on behalf of the UMES family, to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Madam Speaker Adrienne Jones for cross-filing this bill in the House.

On the bill, – We are extremely grateful that this bill is reintroduced for the 2021 legislative session.

The action of a favorable vote of these committee members would bring much overdue remedy to years of inadequate funding, capital improvements, renovations, and new program development thus providing opportunities and a brighter future to our HBCU students now!

I cannot tell you how much it means to me personally and would mean for our institution.

Briefly, SB 1, **will** positively impact the lives of our students at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and fundamentally change the university in meaningful ways for years to come.

This legislation, when approved, will strengthen four areas: (1) scholarship enhancements (2) academic program enhancements, (3) marketing and recruiting enhancements, and (4) capital improvements.

I'll describe these areas, briefly:

First, our students desperately need scholarship dollars to help them afford their educational journey. My first three priorities when I arrived at UMES, were – and still are – scholarships, scholarships and scholarships! As a first-generation college student myself, I know, personally, that not having scholarship money can quickly END an academic career.

Second, significant academic enhancements **will** be made to our array of programs so that UMES can become more competitive. We are the **only 1890**-Land Grant Doctoral Research institution in the State. We have strong programs in agriculture and health care and STEM areas. We have a working farm on our campus where researchers are investigating all manners of animal health in feeding and growing. UMES desires to establish a Veterinary Science School, which will help combat the national shortage of veterinarians, especially in rural areas.

This new school will allow UMES to position itself as the sole veterinary school within the state and provide the much-needed collaborative relationships with the agricultural industry on the Shore. We are perfectly positioned to launch Maryland's first Veterinary School, which would be a game changer for UMES and for the state of Maryland.

In addition, it will strengthen existing academic programs ensuring that we have the labs and state-of-the-art facilities, proper management and maintenance of those facilities, and qualified faculty/staff within the departments.

Third, enhanced efforts in the areas of marketing and recruiting. The growing list of for-profit institutions that spend millions of dollars on marketing and branding have virtually taken over the narrative of what a college should be. UMES has never had a fully funded marketing program to shape our brand and tell our story. Without that, we are often not even on the short-list for many students, because if you do not know about UMES, how can you possibly consider us? Of course, the COVID pandemic has exacerbated the situation even further since we cannot bring students to campus to introduce them to the many wonderful opportunities we have to offer. These funds could make UMES competitive in a space we have never been able to occupy before.

Fourth, our campus has endured years of deferred maintenance in order to make ends-meet. When I arrived, the library was closed because of a roof deterioration and a storm. Our campus experiences floods almost multiple times a year leaving damage in its wake. We have several dormitories not in use because they are gravely in need of repairs.

To underscore the legacy of UMES and HBCUs, we are proud of our Frederick Douglass Library, Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center, and other African American leaders whose namesakes title our buildings. Funding from this bill will allow us to renovate these aging buildings, that have deteriorated into dire conditions. These much-needed funds will allow UMES to modernize its aging infrastructure.

I encourage my team to be fiscally responsible. In our current state of reduced enrollment at UMES, we are committed daily to efficiency, and managing our financial affairs while adopting best practices to increase enrollment. The good news, resulting from UMES's team efforts across campus, provides a bright outlook for Fall 2021. And we **need** to be ready. Our facilities **need** to be competitive; we **need** to pursue telling our story, voice our vision and offer scholarships to promising students to help close the economic gap for them.

HBCUs are vitally important institutions.

Finally, HBCUs are vitally important institutions. While, HBCUs represent only 3% of colleges and universities in the U.S., we enroll 12% of all African American students. HBCUs produce 23% of all African American graduates, confer 40% of STEM degrees and 60% of all engineering degrees for African American students. According to the same data source, HBCUs educate 50% of African American teachers and 40% of African America health professionals. Seventy percent of African American dentists and physicians earned degrees at HBCUs. (Historically Black Colleges and Universities October 2015 data.)

HBCUs disproportionally enroll low-income, first-generation and academically underprepared college students. **These** are the students who are the most at-risk for economic hardships, but also, with the achievement of a bachelor's degree are the most upwardly mobile, becoming productive contributors to society. More than 75% of HBCU students rely on Pell Grants. (Thurgood Marshall College Fund.)

According to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf), HBCUs have 1/8 of the average size of endowments than predominately white institutions (PWIs), however they continue to provide an affordable education to millions of students of color graduating the majority of America's African American teachers, judges, engineers, and other STEM professionals.

Please, help us educate the next generation of Marylanders to be ready for our collective bright and promising future, with the passage of SB1.

In closing, I respectfully request your "favorable vote" for SB1 HBCU Funding bill.

Thank you!

Dr. Heidi M. Anderson
President UMES