



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

House Bill 530

Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Disparities Within and Independence From University System of Maryland – Study

February 17, 2022

**Joann A. Boughman, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Letter of Information**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on House Bill 530. The bill requires the University System of Maryland (USM) to hire an independent consultant to study and make recommendations on disparities within the USM and the three Historically Black Institutions (HBIs) governed by the USM Board of Regents.

The University System of Maryland fully supports rigorous and researched measures to eliminate disparities across all 12 institutions that are governed by the Board of Regents – especially when those disparities may negatively impact Maryland’s venerated Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). Bowie State University (BSU), Coppin State University (CSU), and the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (UMES) – in addition to being rural-serving, urban serving and in the shadow of our Nation’s capital – stand as educational and professional lifelines for underrepresented students, faculty and staff.

Practically, the HBIs benefit from membership in the USM by leveraging economies-of-scale such as centralized services (audit, construction management, real property development). As part of the USM, the HBIs have greater buying power (pooled purchase of energy and implementing cost-effective management strategies), access to capital, and built-in connections to guidance and partnership on issues such as enrollment and accreditation. They are full and valued partners to at least one dozen stakeholder groups (including but not limited to: provosts, vice presidents for student affairs, financial aid officers, enrollment management executives, administration and finance) who regularly convene to facilitate collaborations and efficiencies among the institutions.

The past 15 years laid bare a tough debate, negotiation and compromise to forge the path forward to improve the immediate resource allocations to all of Maryland’s HBIs. When an agreement was struck to direct \$577 million in supplemental funding over the course of a decade to Maryland’s HBIs it signaled the investment in cutting edge programs to help expand access to academic programs including online programs, bolster scholarship and financial aid support, and create professional development opportunities. Maryland’s USM HBIs enroll 9,037 students: 77.5% are Black; 3.4% are White. It is important to know that approximately 40% of Black students within the USM are students at HBCUs. Moreover, HBCUs serve a significant number of students who are eligible for Pell Grants, which are limited to students with demonstrated high financial need, who have not earned their first bachelor's degree. Black students make up 80% of the Pell-eligible students at HBCUs as opposed to 39% of the Pell-eligible students at across all of USM.

Furthermore, USM's three HBCUs serve 27% of the Black Pell-eligible population across the USM.

Highlighting the extent to which disparities exist between HBIs and their sister institutions is a fair question. However, the recognition and recommendations to eliminate those disparities is a collective effort that should be informed, rightfully, by the leaders of BSU, CSU and UMES. These USM presidents are mindful of research and data that strive to understand not just disparities based on race and ethnicity or between institutions, but also those more profound internal disparities based on family income, social class, geography and gender. Arguably, the response to these disparities is as important to USM's ability to graduate more diverse student bodies on-time with less debt and an employment opportunity.

The work is on-going. Eliminating disparities in higher education, generally, is nuanced and complicated. The USM, and all of the constituent institutions, are happy to discuss these matters further.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share these thoughts regarding House Bill 530.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor's degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.