



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF ADVISORS MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, January 7, 2025, AT 5:00 PM
USMSM, TELECONFERENCE

In Attendance (online): George Hurlburt, Chris Kaselemis, Eileen Abel, Christine Bergmark, Evelyne Bryant-Ward, Jean Coombs, Anthony Foster, Bonnie Green, Ellen Herbst, Glen Ives, Kaprece James, Gary Kessler, Maria Navarro, Julie Oberg, Matt Scassero, Theresa Schafer, J. Scott Smith, Johnnie Taylor, Yolanda Wilson, and Alison Wrynn.

Not in Attendance: Joe Anderson, Senator Jack Bailey, Betsy Beise, Kathy Maney, Phillip Melton, Tuajuanda Jordan, Kelly Robertson-Slagle, and Andrae Townsel

Invited guests: Ayomide (Mide) Banjo, Brad Stover (Office of the Attorney General).

Call to Order: George Hurlburt, chair, welcomed and called the Board of Advisors (BoA) to order at 5:04 p.m. He opened with a brief review of significant 2024 events.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the October 8, 2024, meeting were distributed for approval. Dr. Yolanda Wilson motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Glen Ives. Julie Oberg abstained due to her absence from the last board meeting. The motion carried.

USMSM Recruiting Efforts:

Full-time recruiter Ayomide (Mide) Banjo, Coordinator of Undergraduate Program Pathways, presented her role and accomplishments since joining the USMSM Staff in 2024. She has attended college and career fairs, visited schools, hosted an open house, and organized engineering days on campus. Mide emphasized the importance of building relationships with high schools, middle schools, community colleges, and community groups across Southern Maryland. She also discussed plans to meet with Calvert County schools and to focus on connections with minority groups, homeschooled students, and cultural groups in 2025.

Executive Director Report:

Eileen provided updates on the center's activities. She announced two donors to the scholarship fund and \$500 support from the University System of Maryland for an on-campus food pantry. Eileen also shared plans to transform the Internet Café into a student lounge, with the backing from the UMD College of Engineering. She reviewed the upcoming Data Science program with Coppin State University. USMSM will help underwrite the efforts to build a regionally

meaningful Data Science curriculum over the coming months. Eileen gave updates on the public art project contracted to artist Pu Sho Wang. This exciting, interactive outdoor sculpture is due for a December 2025 completion date. The Strategic Plan is approved and undergoing cosmetic treatment for hardcopy and web publication. Eileen then briefly discussed the various programs running at the center. Lastly, Eileen is restarting the hiring process for the communications position and two part-time positions for employer outreach and development.

Matrix Update:

Matt shared updates on the research component of the USMSM campus, highlighting the hiring of Dr. Bucket Costello, who is leading research on the test and evaluation of autonomous systems. He also mentioned the successful Autonomy Summit, the monthly Engineering Lecture Series, and the hiring of both a new research lab manager and a MATRIX Laboratory Recruiter. He summarized the progress of the Advanced Manufacturing Laboratory, its related educational programs, and the potential for a Manufacturing Lab at scale in Southern Maryland. Matt noted that a MATRIX Laboratory Advisory Group was being formed, comprising leading autonomy vendors

Matt also announced his retirement on June 1st. Theresa asked about the advanced manufacturing work, to which Matt responded that it involves large-scale manufacturing technologies and certification of processes. Gary asked about the vision for the industry advisory group, to which Matt explained it's a small group of 4-5 companies leading in autonomous technologies, providing strategic advice on areas of importance. Matt will follow up with Gary regarding potential investment opportunities for technologies developed at the center.

Board Composition: Setting the Stage Discussion

Chris expressed concerns about the size and structure of the board, suggesting that a smaller, more engaged group could help move forward with strategic plans. He proposed the formation of an executive committee and possibly working groups to aid in the review process. Chris suggested once the review process is completed, it may be necessary to update the bylaws. Chris also mentioned the need to review the board's composition. Maria asked for a more concrete timeline for the nominating committee. Chris stated he would like to start the review process once the working group is established. Chris is looking to recruit three volunteers to help with this.

George presented an overview of the strategic plan and its key objectives. He noted the Plan's vision statement calls for academic programs to align with regional workforce demands, which leads to levels of specialization, particularly for the significant federal sector presence in the region. He further observed that the plan emphasizes building career pathways, certifications, K-12 engagement, program review, and accelerated education programs. Other highlighted priorities are regional partnerships across the tri-county area, promoting diversity and affordability, fundraising, brand awareness, and strengthening industry-academic partnerships. George proposed organizing BoA efforts around implementing these objectives while acknowledging this must be accomplished against severe funding constraints.

George emphasized the need for regional balance and ethnic and gender representation on the board. As did Chris, he suggested reviving the Executive Committee to focus on significant issues. He also proposed the formation of task-oriented fluid working groups to address specialized areas. These groups would not necessarily be comprised of board members but could potentially include external constituents. The notion is to capture expertise and cultivate those with deep topical interest. George mentioned the need for a new Finance Working Group to handle scholarships and revenue diversification and a Legislative Working Group for legislative advocacy and potential funding.

George and Eileen discussed the implementation of the 2023 marketing plan. Eileen also mentioned the ongoing need for a dedicated communications professional to begin to execute the plan.

George asked for a discussion about reorganizing the board's structure and reinforcing the formation of specialized working groups to focus on specific areas. He also sought input on eventual changes to the bylaws to facilitate such a reorganization. Glen questioned the specifics of the proposed structure and suggested a need for more focus on what needs to be accomplished. Maria suggested that the Board of Advisors should detail the tasks and then suggest the right individuals with the necessary expertise to execute them. Chris agreed that the question of composition and structure requires thought and suggested that ideas could be emailed to the nominating committee. Christine suggested that the fluid committees could have board members leading them and serve as agents to bring in expertise as needed.

There was a brief discussion of the need for a clearer understanding of expectations from the Board of Advisors, particularly in relation to workforce initiatives and strategic planning. They acknowledged the importance of tapping into existing resources and influencing employers to share their needs. An ad hoc Steering Committee was proposed to help flush out specific requirements for each working group. Also discussed were the potential benefits of the larger BoA, including the presence of various superintendents, college presidents, and other key figures. The members present emphasized a more specific focus on Work Group tasking was necessary to ensure the growth, recognition, and success of USMSM.

George proposed the formation of an ad hoc Steering Committee to guide future actions. This interim committee includes George, Chris, Christine, Glenn, Scott, and Bonnie. All present agreed upon the committee's formation. George also reiterated Chris' request for volunteers to serve on the all-important nominating committee.

The conversation ended with a motion for adjournment, which was approved.

The **next BOA Meeting** will be on April 1, 2025, 5:00-6:30pm.