



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

In Attendance: Joe Anderson, Dr. Evalyne Bryant-Ward, Ellen Herbst (USM), Anthony Foster (USM), Bonnie Green, George Hurlburt, Glen Ives, Kaprese James, Gary Kessler, Dr. Maria Navarro, Dr. Dale Nesbary, Julie Oberg, Dr. Theresa Shafer, Dr. J. Scott Smith, Brad Stover (Office of the Attorney General), Dr. Yolanda Wilson, and Dr. Alison Wrynn (USM).

Not in Attendance: Senator Jack Bailey, Dr. Christine Bergmark, Kathy Maney, Philip Melton, and Dr. Rhonda Phillips.

Call to Order: Chairman George Hurlburt welcomed and called the Board of Advisors (BoA) to order at 5:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Bonnie Green made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2025, meeting, seconded by Glen Ives. The motion carried.

Chair Remarks:

The meeting commenced with George Hurlburt confirming a quorum existed. Mr. Hurlburt provided a brief overview of the agenda. He encouraged Zoom participants to introduce themselves and to participate in the dialogue at any time. A BoA document repository may be found at <https://go.umd.edu/USMSMBOA>, but this address is open access and should not be shared

Executive Director Report:

Dr. Dale Nesbary discussed the search for his leadership position that required a candidate with both academic and practical experience, as well as the ability to represent the institution at various levels. He highlighted his background, including extensive experience in academia, law enforcement, and public policy, and emphasized his research and practical contributions. Dr. Nesbary also mentioned his work in various institutions and his role as a professor and college president, showcasing his diverse experience in higher education and public service.

Dr. Nesbary, highlighted his assigned tasks regarding programs, infrastructure, and building community. Key program initiatives included discussions leading to the introduction of a data

science master's program from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and expanding partnerships with organizations such as the Kennedy Krieger Center. A number of Infrastructure improvements are needed on campus. These include new windows for building two, added security enhancements, and ongoing technology upgrades. The USM system offices are working with USMSM to move these initiatives forward.

Dr. Nesbary emphasized the significance of dual enrollment and early college programs for student success, noting that the State of Maryland as a whole lags behind national average/mean participation, while local districts and CSM do relatively well compared to the rest of the state. He also reported that social media and website offerings were improving to further community connections.

Dr. Nesbary emphasized the importance of taking advantage of educational funding opportunities, as they are often scarce.

Dr. Theresa Shafer, the NAWCAD CTO, mentioned Dr. Costello's initiative to create a certification course and, eventually, a master's program in Development Test and Evaluation Verification and Validation (DTEVV). DTEVV focuses on applied test and evaluation of autonomous systems. The MATRIX team plans to gather input from academia, industry, and government during an upcoming two-day event on November 17 and 18. This new program of study recognizes the increasingly essential role of software engineering across development, testing, and evaluation, especially as all forms of Artificial Intelligence (AI) influence autonomous system operations.

USM Updates:

Ellen Herbst reported that the University System of Maryland graduated a record number of students at 45,000 in 2025 and anticipates strong fall enrollment exceeding the 2018 record of 176,000. Despite this positive news, the system faces a \$210 million reduction in base budget appropriations since 2024. This shortfall poses challenges for financial stability. Ms. Herbst also discussed the adverse effects of federal actions on research funding and financial aid, particularly for international students.

Ms. Herbst highlighted that state tax receipts have surpassed expectations, but the recent exit of 150,000 federal employees may have significant implications for Maryland's economy. The impact of these departures will not be evident until December tax receipts are reported. Additionally, she noted that government shutdowns typically delay federal employees' paychecks, affecting tax receipts and small businesses reliant on federal workers.

Ms. Herbst introduced Dr. Wrynn to share her insights. Dr. Wrynn discussed the successful AI training grant awarded by the National Association of Higher Education Systems and Google, emphasizing its integration into the curriculum, especially at the University of Maryland Global Campus. She noted the critical relationship between AI and environmental concerns. She also mentioned the significance of early college programs and the collaboration with community colleges, thanking Dr. Wilson for her leadership in partnering through the USM Higher Education Working Group.

Ms. Herbst highlighted the substantial cuts in research funding across various sectors, notably environmental and health-related areas, with NIH facing severe reductions. The Department of Defense is experiencing some cuts but is generally doing well. NASA is adapting by exploring commercialization opportunities. The budget proposals from the House and Senate indicate potential funding levels that could exceed the President's budget request.

Database Overview and Future Development Plans

Mr. Hurlburt provided a brief overview of the Southern Maryland Workforce Operational Readiness Database (SWORD). SWORD, a web-based tool, grew from an existing knowledge base using graph technology. SWORD uniquely enables the detailing of educational K-20 pathways and certifications available across Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. It also takes regional public programs and non-profit initiatives into consideration to round out the broader regional educational environment. The database aims to support regional workforce development. Database maintenance, however, is continuous and complicated, requiring a significant labor commitment. Hence, Mr. Hurlburt developed a proposal seeking to automate SWORD maintenance using Agentic AI. It has been issued.

Advisory Board Discussions:

Mr. Hurlburt led a review of the status of the Board of Advisors (BoA) committees and Working groups.

Delayed by the Strategic Plan and the loss of the Vice Chairman to retirement, the statutory Nominating Committee has been delayed in its essential work. It will now be chaired in the interim by Past BoA Chair Joe Anderson. Joe reported that he will prioritize building the BoA tri-county representation and arrange an election for chair, vice chair, and secretary. He also noted the value of considering viable candidates regardless of what positions they may hold,

Mr. Hurlburt thanked all the BoA members who supported the Workforce Working Group's first round of activity. He also noted that numerous notable non-BoA participants were engaged in the effort. While the gestation of the detailed final report was lengthy, it has been reinforced by SWORD data and reviewed multiple times. It has now been submitted. Next steps, following the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Working Group activity, will involve estimating cohort sizes and identifying possible adjuncts available for consideration by offering institutions.

The WBL Working Group, under Bonnie Green's leadership, will be formed to improve the methods for collecting and cataloging internship, apprenticeship, and scholarship opportunities across the Southern Maryland Region. Ms. Green reported on the proposed composition of this working group, pending organizational approval.

Senator Jack Bailey leads the Legislative Working Group. As needed, this working group, in concert with USM, is intended to seek legislative relief from bureaucratic challenges in course delivery in Southern Maryland. Senator Bailey will be asked to report regularly on legislative initiatives in future meetings.

The Communications Working Group has not yet been formed, but a volunteer has been sought after to lead it. The ultimate purpose is to offer advice on regionally tailored marketing messages, media, and possible public service announcement opportunities. In the short term, however, a proposed lecture series on “Doing Business with the Federal Government” could increase community engagement on an ever-changing topical issue of high regional interest. Patterned after the successful Evening at SMART lecture series, this hybrid event could broaden USMSM’s reach. Joe Anderson encouraged input on committee leadership, acknowledging the challenges posed by the current situation. Theresa Shafer from NAWCAD stated she could not lead a committee, but was willing to assist, highlighting the potential for synergy in expanding knowledge on non-traditional contracting methods. Given the current state of Government affairs amidst a shutdown, there was a sense that discussions should get underway, but action would be tabled until after the shutdown. An advantage in this approach is the added time to seek and engage interested participants from the Smith School of Business.

Finally, the creation of a Development Working Group remains deferred until the other working groups have made progress in further working to advise on why substantial giving is warranted.

The meeting concluded with a motion for adjournment, which was approved.

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