USMSM
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of MARYLAND
AT SOUTHERN MARYLAND

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF ADVISORS MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, February 10, 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, Kaprese James, Gary Kessler, Dr. Dale Nesbary, Julie Oberg, Dr. J. Scott Smith, Brad Stover (Office of the Attorney General), Ron Price (CSM), and Cindy Greb.

Not in Attendance: Senator Jack Bailey, Philip Melton, and Dr. Rhonda Phillips. Dr. Alison Wrynn (USM), Dr. Theresa Shafer, Glen Ives, and Dr. Maria Navarro

Call to Order: Chairman George Hurlburt welcomed and called the Board of Advisors (BoA) to order at 5:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Gary Kessler made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2025, meeting, seconded by Bonnie Green. The motion carried.

Chair Remarks:

Mr. George Hurlburt praised Joe Anderson and the Nominating Committee for their hard work in simplifying board elections. He then discussed progress on hiring a new executive director, with a search committee actively recruiting candidates for interviews in May.

Mr. Hurlburt reviewed key factors, including workforce challenges, marketing needs, and a strong partnership with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM). The CSM partnership proposal is slated to be revisited in the April 2026 BOA meeting. He also noted that specialization is needed per the former BoA Workforce report, given that USMSM cannot be all things to all people. Worse, a projected 13% decline in high school graduates by 2041 and nearly two-thirds of students enrolling in state community colleges require some form of remediation (according to the Maryland Higher Education Commission in 2022) strongly suggest the need to engage in adult continuing education to provide valued, monetized regional services.

Mr. Hurlburt focused on key priorities, including education funding, technology growth, and strengthening marketing strategies to better attract and retain students. He emphasized the importance of expanding hybrid learning options and addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

He further highlighted the need for more localized marketing efforts and improvements to both the website and social media to ensure tailored, localized information relevant to the Regional Higher Education Center (RHEC). This includes strengthening the value of the CSM partnership on the website and clearly stating RHEC's localized role. Additional topics for the website included the development of early college programs, the importance of regional specialization, and the inclusion of the unique USMSM research mission.

The conversation concluded with plans to hold elections for the Board of Advisors, review strategic plan metrics, explore opportunities for business seminars and expand the work-based learning frameworks for internships, apprenticeships, and scholarships.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Dale Nesbary emphasized the importance of early college programs and of preparing teachers and students in Southern Maryland, with the goal of elevating the state from second to first in the nation in overall education rankings. He testified before the Maryland House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee, along with USM Chancellor Jay Perman, MD, College of Southern Maryland President Dr. Yolanda Wilson, St. Mary's Public Schools Superintendent, and USMSM Board of Advisors Member Dr. J. Scott Smith in support of HB 479, which moves these efforts forward.

Vice Chancellor Ellen Herbst confirmed that, if the bill passes, Southern Maryland will launch the state's first early college teacher education pilot program. Kaprece James asked about letters of support for the bill, and Ellen noted that such letters would be beneficial.

He also attended a meeting of the Maryland Senate Ways and Means and Appropriations Education Committee to discuss general appropriations for Regional Higher Education Centers (RHECs). Chancellor Perman, Vice Chancellor Ellen Herbst, and Vice Chancellor Alison Wrynn responded to the Committee, which included USMSM Board of Advisors Member Jack Bailey.

Dr. Nesbary also shared plans to hire a communications staff member to oversee key initiatives, including redesigning the website to ensure ADA compliance. He highlighted several upcoming events, including the Southern Maryland Future Pipeline Summit and an Open House scheduled for early April.

Dr. J. Scott Smith provided updates on the teacher pipeline and stressed the need for in-person bachelor's degree programs in Southern Maryland.

MATRIX Laboratory Report

Dr. Jamison Watson provided updates on the Matrix Lab's recent activities, emphasizing progress in education, research, and industry partnerships. In education, he outlined a new STEM Education Consortium initiative with CSM to seek grants to broaden technical curricula

pathways. He noted funding opportunities for short courses in Adaptive Manufacturing, Drone Charging, and Technical Readiness Levels.

The lab secured its first external grants from ONR and Lockheed Martin and is participating in congressional funding requests related to AI-augmented metal manufacturing and swarm control. Total grants awarded so far exceed $1M. Dr. Watson also highlighted collaborations with Clark School of Engineering faculty on research initiatives, as well as plans for an upcoming lecture series and industry open-house events.

USM Budget and Enrollment Update

Ellen Herbst provided an overview of the USM budget, highlighting a slight 0.6% year-over-year increase and a $42 million allocation for research funding, with $25 million going to USM schools. She noted that 11 out of 12 appropriation bills in Congress have been passed, providing better research funding numbers than initially anticipated. Ellen also mentioned that the governor has approved 1.5% COLA for all employees and discussed upcoming budget hearings in the Senate and House. She concluded by noting record-breaking enrollment for fall but warned of potential impacts on graduate enrollment due to financial aid cuts and changes in immigration policies.

Nominating Committee - Elections

Joe Anderson, Acting Chair of the Nominating Committee, presided over this session. He nominated George Hurlburt for re-election as chair, Evelyn Ward Bryant as vice chair, and Kaprice James as secretary. The motion was deferred pending approval of term renewals for the existing members of the BOA.

Gary Kessler nominated the returning BOA members to continue their terms. Members included Joe Anderson, Glen Ives, Bonnie Green, George Hurlburt, Philip Melton, Gary Kessler, Dr. Theresa Shaffer, and new statutory ex officio members, Cindy Greb, and Dr. Rhonda Phillips. The motion carried.

Kaprece James nominated new members of the Board of Advisors: Dr. Sybol Anderson, John Hartline, Thomas Saul, and Briana Madigan. Motion carried.

No further nominations for officer candidates were offered, and the BoA unanimously passed the Nominating Committee officer slate as nominated.

The Board of Advisors reaffirmed 16 existing members, including 4 new members, thus meeting the bylaws provision of 20 members.

Action Items:

The Board of Advisors discussed a proposal for AI metrics to measure strategic plan goals, with Anthony Foster from the system office supporting the development of metrics that measure outcomes and generate stakeholder support. Also discussed plans for a symposium series on doing business with the federal government, potentially starting in the fall semester. Finally, Mr. Hurlburt offered to share the website analysis for further review and comment.

BoA Member Updates:

Bonnie Green discussed the upcoming SPARK Career Fair on March 25th, with 800 participants expected.

Cindy Greb announced the new lease agreement allowing St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce to co-locate with St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development. Their offices are on the second floor of the Governmental Center.

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

The **next BOA Meeting** will be on April 7, 2025, 5:00-6:30 pm.