



Maryland Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Senate Testimony - SB 1052 University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act of 2016

Dr. Robert L. Caret

Chancellor, University System of Maryland

Chairman Kasemeyer, Vice Chairman Madaleno, and members of the committee . . . as USM Board of Regents Vice Chairman Barry Gossett noted, SB 1052—The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act of 2016—represents an admirable idea: Expanding and strengthening the partnership between the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) to take fuller advantage of the educational, economic, and quality of life impact of these to great institutions. Certainly unleashing this potential—MPower on steroids as I have heard some people call it—has the ability to benefit the state, the system, these universities, and the students we serve.

However, as Vice Chairman Gossett also noted: SB 1052 is very complex and would have far-reaching implications that would be felt not just in Baltimore and College Park, but literally throughout the system and across the state.

As USM Chancellor, I fully support the Board of Regents’ proposal that we take 12 months to conduct a comprehensive review of the legislation, to examine which elements expand partnerships and which do not, and to study how best to implement the most effective changes. From our review so far, I can tell you that along with the need to reaffirm certain principles, we believe there are aspects of SB 1052 that require further analysis or clarification, and elements that need to be changed or reconsidered.

Starting with reaffirmations, it needs to be made clear that the two campuses of the “University of Maryland” and the current constituent institutions will remain in the University System of Maryland. This should include a recognition of the role each institution currently plays in its region, specifically UMB’s outreach to west Baltimore and the broader Baltimore Community and UMCP’s outreach to the greater College Park Area. Baltimore City and College Park are unique communities with unique populations

and each institution must maintain its autonomy to ensure the needs of the communities they serve continue to be a priority.

The legislation should also clearly assert the roles of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor in governing and leading the strategic partnership. This should include personnel decisions, fiscal stewardship, and institutional oversight responsibilities.

The legislation needs to specifically speak to maintaining the strong educational and research relationship the two institutions have with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS).

The legislation needs to clearly articulate the State of Maryland's commitment to access, affordability and quality in public higher education for its citizens. This should include improving the adequacy of funding across the USM.

Finally, we need to reaffirm the historical collaborative relationship between UMB and UMBC as well as the roles of the other USM institutions in enhancing completion, workforce development, and economic prosperity.

Moving to the need for further analysis and clarification, it is not clear that the partnership would achieve the national rankings, as envisioned by the proposed legislation, within the framework used by organizations and other entities. For example, in reaching out to professionals at the National Science Foundation, USM staff were informed that the NSF distinguishes between campuses based on a president (or chancellor), and that a "dual presidency" would not qualify under their current rules. They would continue to survey UMCP and UMB as two different campuses even if they have one IPEDS OPEID number.

There needs to be a more thorough assessment of the impact that an enhanced strategic alliance between UMCP and UMB would have on our ability to serve the other 60 percent of USM students enrolled at our residential campuses (and nearly 70% including UMUC).

The size and composition of the University of Maryland Joint Steering Council, and who ultimately makes those determinations, need to be more clearly defined.

Lastly, there needs to be assurance of equal standing in the strategic partnership for UMCP and UMB. For example, each should have explicit authority to confer with the Governor on certain issues including the operating budget and the capital improvement program.

Finishing up with the areas that need changes or reconsiderations, the language granting the University of Maryland Center for Economic and Entrepreneurship (UMCEED) the authority to develop degree programs needs to be dropped. UMCEED would not be a university, and as such should not have this authority.

There needs to be a provision added to ensure adequate funding for the relocation of the USM headquarters to the City of Baltimore.

Language should be added establishing a systemwide funding level that enables us to more effectively prepare students across the USM for successful careers and impactful lives, and better serve the State of Maryland.

The language related to a unified personnel system between the two campuses should be reconsidered. This would be far more cumbersome than the legislation indicates, and may well not be necessary to advance the important elements of a strategic partnership. This should be explored or studied, rather than mandated.

Finally, the legislation states that “The University of Maryland consists of a strategic partnership between the College Park Campus and the Baltimore Campus.” We are unaware of any university in any state being defined as a “strategic partnership” between campuses. That language needs to be reworked for the sake of clarity.

Let me close my testimony by again making clear: The USM is supportive of the **concept** provided in the bill. A more expansive and impactful version of MPower is a positive idea with significant potential.

But as the examples I just enumerated indicate, there are serious concerns regarding this legislation as currently drafted that need to be addressed. To echo Barry’s point, the Board of Regents and staff at the System Office are equipped to address these concerns if given the time and space needed for a comprehensive review.

Tasking the Board of Regents to work within the bill's construct of an enhanced alignment over the next 12 months to develop an action plan—while delaying specific implementation—would be the most effective avenue to reach our mutually desired destination of a greater strategic partnership.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.