Testimony
to the Maryland General Assembly

Maryland House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Education & Economic Development
Wednesday, February 27, 2013
and

Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Subcommittee on Education, Business & Administration
Monday, March 4, 2013

Presented by:
Juliette B. Bell, Ph.D.
President
Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to share recent accomplishments and future plans of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES).

The University, its administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni would like to thank Governor Martin O’Malley and the entire Maryland General Assembly for their unwavering support of Maryland’s higher education students. Your continued support of the University System of Maryland (USM) ensures us the continued ability to provide our students with unparalleled educational opportunities.

As a part of the nation’s best system of higher education, UMES will continue to effectively steward its resources as we diligently provide access to, and ensure completion of, degrees of higher education for Maryland’s diverse populations, with the ultimate goal of positioning Maryland as a powerhouse in this innovation economy.

With your support, Maryland has held down college costs, making college affordable for our citizens. The USM has taken a leading role in helping the state to achieve its goal of having 55% of adult Marylanders attain college degrees and has increased the number of college degree holders who are adequately trained to meet Maryland’s workforce needs. Further, your support has helped the USM to drive economic development, helping the state to be positioned as a competitive innovation leader.

A $24.4 million enhanced funding investment in USM and UMES will increase the number of diverse graduates in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and health disciplines such as pharmacy, physician assistant and physical therapy. This investment in USM and UMES will add more jobs to Maryland’s economy, particularly on the Eastern Shore and it will transform the learning environment for thousands of students, making higher education not only affordable, but attainable. Your support of the Governor’s budget is an investment in USM and UMES and will help power Maryland forward.

ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY AND ATTAINMENT

UMES performs an essential role in helping the state achieve its goal of 55% of adults holding at least one degree or certificate by 2025.

ACCESS

As the diversity of our campus continues to grow, our commitment to providing first-generation college students of all races equitable access to high quality educational experiences has not wavered. The university has seen an influx in our first-generation student population, students who are economically disadvantaged, and the percentage of students who are Pell grant recipients. For the 2011-2012 academic year, UMES disbursed $9.7 million in Federal Pell Grants to 2,309 students, over half of UMES’ student body.

Our most recent data show that 60% of the students we educate come from economically disadvantage backgrounds. We have also found that a considerable number of these students enter UMES ill-prepared for the rigors of higher education and while some do not, many require a substantial amount of developmental support and report high unmet financial need. Over 80% of all UMES students, both in state and out of state, receive some kind of financial assistance with 75% of that population qualifying for federal need-based financial aid. Currently, UMES devotes approximately 20% of its revenue from student tuition and fees to need-based financial aid for students.
AFFORDABILITY

In order to address issues of increased financial need, the university has sought greater private support. Over the course of our recent system-wide fundraising campaign, the university saw an increase in private giving, which resulted in a $16.2 million private investment for student financial support, along with faculty development and program initiatives. In 2012, UMES was the lone historically black institution and only USM university to earn the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Circle of Excellence award. UMES received CASE’s Overall Improvement Award based on judges’ analysis of three years of the university’s fundraising data and superior improvement in fundraising over that period.

Continued private and state investment to support student financial aid will empower our students to obtain the degrees that they seek and will help power Maryland forward.

ATTAINMENT

Notwithstanding the financial difficulties that many of our students face, UMES continues to make a significant contribution towards the governor’s goal of increasing the percentage of Marylanders with college degrees to 55% by 2025. The number of degrees awarded over the past six years has increased by 50% from 507 in 2006-2007 academic year to 758 in 2011-2012 academic year. This improvement in awards has occurred as a result of use of best practices for ensuring that students remain on track with their academic plans and are provided the necessary support to be successful. With continuing and increasing support from the state, UMES will be positioned to make even greater contributions towards meeting Maryland’s degree completion goals.

Last year, UMES experienced a 42% growth in STEM graduates, including the first two students to receive the Professional Science Masters (PSM) degree in Quantitative Fisheries and Resource Economics, which is ONLY offered at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, making our graduates the first in Maryland and the nation to earn the degree. UMES is continuing to expand its efforts to grow the number of diverse STEM graduates in order to meet the state’s workforce and innovation needs by adding degrees in Biochemistry (BS); Chemistry (MS); and Physician Assistant Studies (MMS).

In addition, UMES joins 105 doctoral-granting institutions as an associate member of Oak Ridge Associated Universities. ORAU brings together university faculty and students to collaborate on major scientific initiatives that help keep America on the leading edge of science and technology. Oak Ridge Associated Universities selected UMES as its 27th minority institution at its annual meeting in March 2012.

When graduates leave UMES, they are prepared and competitive, capable of meeting Maryland’s workforce and industry needs. UMES Teacher Education graduates, all Praxis II licensed, are a part of Maryland’s more than 60,000 public school teachers, and come from a program focused on providing Maryland students, parents, and communities with great public schools for every child. UMES graduates in unique disciplines such as physical therapy, physician assistant, construction management, hotel and restaurant management and aviation science, are highly sought after and aggressively recruited. Twenty-six (26) academic degree programs are nationally accredited by their professional societies, giving assurance that the programs are credible and competitive.

Currently, 77% of UMES students come from 23 Maryland counties and the city of Baltimore. The largest number of students come from the Lower Easter Shore and Prince George’s counties. The majority of UMES students (51%) are first-generation college students.
The university produces graduates in the areas of workforce shortages, particularly in the area of health professions. The UMES Physician Assistant (PA) program prepares healthcare professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Upon graduation, our PAs deliver primary health services to diverse patient populations on the shore, in our region, and the state. In May 2013, the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions will graduate its first class of pharmacy students, from our innovative three-year accelerated Doctor of Pharmacy program and our goal is to increase the number of pharmacists on the Eastern Shore three-fold.

The UMES undergraduate business program was recently accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International. Educators and business leaders agree that students in accredited business schools are viewed as well-prepared candidates for entry-level jobs when they graduate. UMES joins an elite group of institutions that have achieved accreditation from AACSB International. Roughly five percent, or 648, schools of business – worldwide – have earned this hallmark of excellence.

The PGA Golf Management inaugural cohort began in the fall 2008 semester, consisting of 13 students, and this past December seven cohort members graduated. UMES is the only Historically Black College and University and one of only 20 universities accredited by PGA of America to offer their PGA Golf Management Program. On graduation day six members of the inaugural cohort had jobs waiting for them, and the seventh was close to accepting an offer.

The university’s Physical Therapy and Teacher Education programs continue to enjoy national acclaim, boasting 100% pass rates on their respective licensing examinations.

The UMES Women’s Bowling team won its second straight NCAA Championship, the third overall and fourth total National Championship for our team. While UMES student-athletes perform well on the playing fields, they truly excel in the classroom. Last year UMES student-athletes won their third straight Division I Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Award for highest graduation success in the conference and 64 UMES student-athletes were named to the MEAC Commissioners All-Academic Team.
Dr. Victor Hsia, a pharmaceutical sciences professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, is the recipient of a National Institutes of Health grant he will use to underwrite research into the virus that causes cold sores and complications that can lead to blindness and brain lesions. For the next five years, Hsia has been awarded just under $750,000 to fund his investigation into the cellular and molecular mechanisms of herpes simplex (1) virus during lytic and latent infections.

COMPETITIVENESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UMES spurs innovation on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, through research, entrepreneurship and technology transfer.

With 26 peer-accredited programs, the university continues to increase its academic rigor and standards to ensure that our students remain competitive and are positioned to drive 21st century innovation. UMES continues to be successful in securing external grants and contracts. In AY 2011-2012, more than $19 million was awarded to UMES in grants and contracts, the second highest total grant amount among all comprehensive institutions in the USM, and the highest average grant award per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) among the USM comprehensive institutions and among its peers.

RESEARCH

With continued emphasis on its land-grant mission, UMES remains committed to the Eastern Shore’s farmers and watermen, who still form the core of the Eastern Shore’s economy, by developing practical applications of research knowledge, improved practices or technologies in agriculture, aquaculture, home economics, and rural energy, and related subjects and giving instruction and practical demonstrations in support of our community and constituents.

UMES Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center – LMRCSC

UMES is the lead institution in the $40 million Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center (The Living Marine Center), which was established in 2001 with funding by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) Educational Partnership Program (EPP). The Living Marine Center is one of five centers established nationwide by NOAA EPP since 2001 and supports research and training of students in NOAA-related sciences in order to increase science competency and competitiveness of the U.S. workforce.

Since its establishment in 2001, 15 Living Marine Center graduates with MS and Ph.D. degrees in fisheries have been employed by NOAA. The Living Marine Center has graduated 382 students (286 B.S./B.A., 83 M.S./M.A., and 13 Ph.D.) in NOAA core science areas, with 89 graduates coming from UMES. Further, 24 of the 149 students (62 graduate, 87 undergraduate) currently supported by the Center are from UMES. More than $12 million in leveraged funds have been acquired to support additional programs including $5 million for NSF CREST (Center for Research Excellence in Science and Technology), $700,000 for the NSF Professional Science Master’s Program in Quantitative Fisheries and Resource Economics, and $5 million for the NSF Network of Cooperative Science Centers for Recruiting and Training High School Students in Geosciences.

Through the work of the UMES Rural Development Center (RDC), the university remains committed to expanding rural entrepreneurship and technology transfer efforts in order to strengthen and diversify the rural economy on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.
Since 1990, the RDC has provided grants, loans, technical assistance and product promotion to entrepreneurs to alleviate unemployment and help sustain economic stability.

It is funded by federal and state sources as well as private foundations.

Through the RDC Revolving Loan Fund, the RDC increases manufacturing jobs in Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

UMES RDC Project funding has supported:
- Burley Oak Brewery
- Crabplace.com
- Delmarva Discovery Center
- Hooper’s Island Oyster Aquaculture Company
- Maryland Broadband Cooperative
- Original Smith Island Cake Company

Since 1999, Hardwire, LLC, located in Worcester County, Maryland, has been a partner with the Maryland Hawk Corporation, a non-profit affiliate of the university. Hardwire is a leader in research and the development of composite and protective materials for our military. In response to the recent tragic school shootings, Hardwire and the Maryland Hawk Corporation have partnered to collaborate on providing “Shields for Teachers.” Using armor technologies, Hardwire developed a ballistic whiteboard for use as an everyday teaching tool, which provides emergency armor protection in the event of a school shooting. This project helps take new technologies to our public schools.

UMES Food Sciences and Technology Department, the UMES Rural Development Center, Luke’s Premier Foods, LLC, and Maryland Industrial Partnerships are working together to provide a new revenue stream for our local tomato farmers with specialty bottled heirloom tomato juice products. This project, true to the University’s land-grant mission and extension mandate, assists Luke’s Premier Foods, LLC and our community constituents by developing practical applications of research knowledge and improved technologies in food science to grow and sustain local Maryland-based businesses.

The Hawk Institute for Space Sciences (HISS), formed five years ago with support from the Maryland Hawk Corporation, is a full service engineering company, specializing in aerospace engineering for commercial and government agencies. Focused on training the next generation of aerospace engineers to increase minority participation in aerospace and defense, the company has grown to over forty employees and over five million dollars in revenue. In partnership with HISS, UMES constructed an Unmanned Air System Runway on the campus to grow research and development opportunities, and is partnering with Pax River and Wallops to grow regional and statewide strength in Unmanned Systems.

As an 1890 land grant institution, UMES’ research strength has been in its state agricultural and extension programs. The federal formula funds for both programs mandate, by federal law, matching funds from non-federal sources. Agriculture remains a major factor in the state’s economy including food supply to agribusiness workforce employment. UMES is seeking to strengthen research initiatives that would focus on childhood obesity, improving food security, and climate variability. Without fully matched funds, UMES is vulnerable to losing this federal funding, which could negatively impact UMES’ contribution to agricultural research, extension and workforce in the state. UMES is seeking state funding to provide the required matching funds to ensure that it is able to continue its mandated land-grant mission.

Located just thirty minutes from NASA’s Wallops Island Flight Center, UMES is leading Eastern Shore efforts to expand aerospace innovation. The Undergraduate Multidisciplinary Earth Science-Airborne Imaging Research (UMES-AIR) project, initiated in the fall of 1999, continues to provide a platform for undergraduate students in STEM curricula at UMES in an “out-of-classroom” active learning and exploratory research experience in the field of remote sensing and its applications. Involving more than 20 students from different STEM majors, the scientific objective of the project includes aerial imaging in the visible and infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum, land survey, study of shoreline erosion, research in agricultural land use patterns, and environmental studies pertaining to algae blooms in the Chesapeake Bay. The UMES-AIR project has paved the way for ongoing multidisciplinary projects in remote sensing from other platforms such as remote controlled airplanes, robotic helicopters and kites with support from NASA and the Maryland Space Grant Consortium. These projects not only provide avenues for NASA engineers’ continued involvement with experiential learning and research endeavors of UMES students, but have also been integrated with remote sensing needs of precision agriculture related projects on campus supported by United States Department of Agriculture.
ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION

UMES creatively transforms and enhances the academic experience to meet the needs of today’s diverse students through implementation of new programs and broad retention strategies, course redesign and use of technology.

NEW PROGRAMS

Experiential, hands-on learning opportunities and community engagement are critical for students to make real-life connections to their study in the classroom. The university’s new Office of University Engagement and Lifelong Learning (OUELL) provides an opportunity for the university to continue enhancing its leadership, learning, and community linkages by working in partnership with schools and other community-based organizations to address issues specific to our shared community. To date, OUELL has established a database of approximately 36 UMES outreach/academic-based programs, and a database of 43 community-based organizations and local businesses. UMES students are enrolled in the AmeriCorps Student of Service (SOS) program, a mentoring program aimed at increasing K-12 service learning and civic engagement and the university has recently been awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA Grant entitled “The UMES-GHYC Community Empowerment Project” designed to increase UMES student involvement in local service learning activities.

UMES is now a member of the Maryland DC Campus Compact (MDCCC), and has partnered with the Somerset County Public Schools and Princess Anne Town Commissioners to facilitate a positive Town/Gown relationship. The university coordinated UMES student and faculty volunteers who were among 145 “Good Samaritans” assisting in Hurricane Sandy response efforts for community members in Crisfield and Princess Anne.

STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

While UMES has historically emphasized access for underserved students to a higher education, UMES remains steadfast in ensuring that students complete their education and attain a college degree that prepares them for the future. To that end, UMES has implemented college completion strategies to promote student success. In assessing the practices best suited to our student demographic, UMES has employed a series of strategies, which have yielded an increase in retention rates from 65% (2009) to 69% (2011). Further, the four year graduation rate has increased by 6% for the 2008 cohort. The intentional and intrusive approaches include the following:

Early Alert Referral Program: An early intervention program facilitated by faculty members to connect students who show signs of academic distress within the third to fourth week of the semester with student support services.

Recruit Back Program: A campus-wide collaborative designed to get UMES students back on track to earning degrees. The Recruit Back program charges administrators to find students who have “stopped out” or “dropped out” of the university and help them determine what they still need to complete their studies and earn degrees by following our strategies for their immediate return.
90 & Out Program: A program that reinforces the advising relationship by requiring rising juniors to work with their advisors to ensure that their matriculation toward graduation is on course by conducting an official academic audit of their Candidate Plan of Study once they have earned 90 credit hours.

Male Summit and Pathways to Success Peer Program: Designed to foster a smoother transition into the university for male students, the program connects incoming male students with upper-class male students to engage them in a year-long series of academic and social seminars, life skills events, and leadership development.

The University is currently working to fully implement its comprehensive University Retention Plan, and Academic Affairs is charged with expanding successful strategies while improving or replacing unsuccessful strategies. Understanding the impact of advising, UMES is taking steps to improve the process at the university. While all full time teaching faculty serve as advisors, we are expanding the number of dedicated advisors to each School. Faculty advisors are being asked to refocus on problem solving, student success planning, adherence to curriculum plans, and scheduled tracking and reviews of student progress; and all advising services are being streamlined by improving advisor/advisee interactions. Specifically to be addressed will be the modes utilized for communication between advisor/advisee.

UMES’ commitment to improve retention and graduation rates includes making better use of online resources in preparation to expand summer offerings for working students through online course delivery. Finally, in the mode of continuous improvement, the university will sustain focus on data collection and related analyses with the goal of improving retention at every level.

COURSE REDESIGN

An ever-evolving society calls for innovative strategies in course content delivery. UMES understands that the 21st-century workforce requires workers to be tech-savvy global thinkers. In a continuing effort to increase student success, UMES is using best practices to retool the learning environment through course redesign and use of technology. Introductory courses can be challenging to both the faculty and the student. There is often inconsistent knowledge of course content among incoming students; there are varying levels of student retention of material since high school graduation; and traditional lecture-based formats do not consistently engage students. In addition, a large number of sections must be taught but often lack coordination among professors teaching the various sections of the course, leading to course drift and/or inconsistent learning outcomes.

UMES has reviewed and redesigned seven gatekeeper courses that are critical to student success, with a goal of creating a long-term and self-sustaining program that redesigns traditional courses into highly interactive academic experiences. Six of the seven redesigned courses are in the STEM areas. The early results of the STEM course redesign are encouraging with an increased student pass rate of 14% and 19% for the Principles of Chemistry I and II, respectively. The university intends to continue this process in the upcoming year, and has applied for support in developing four additional courses.

Market demand continues to grow rapidly for online course delivery and online enrollments are offsetting declines in traditional classroom enrollment in many areas. UMES intends to increase the number of courses offered on-line as quickly as it is feasible by implementing online summer courses that will keep students engaged in their academic program and degree pursuit. We believe that successful implementation of comprehensive and increased on-line course offerings will result in better retention and a shorter period for degree completion.
During Summer 2013, the university will begin an assessment to review overall content and program relevancy in order to align our academic programs to meet the state’s workforce needs, resulting in the identification of programs for deletion, redesign, revision, and addition. The analysis is intended to provide a five to seven year strategic academic blueprint for course and program development and phasing out of courses/programs no longer deemed relevant and/or in demand.

STRENGTHENING ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

Strengthening the teaching and learning environment requires the hiring and retention of well-qualified, full-time faculty and increased faculty develop opportunities as well as articulation agreements, MOU’s and co-operative efforts that result in recruitment and retention of high quality and more diverse students.

UMES seeks to improve the structure for attracting, developing and retaining high-quality, diverse faculty and staff by implementing additional faculty/professional development activities, improving the UMES brand/image, and providing increased customer service training. Also, by expanding partnerships with business, government and industry and increasing our work with community based organizations and other institutions of higher education, UMES seeks to reach its goal of partnering to productively expand our reach.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

UMES effectively stewards its public and private resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The UMES – SunEdison Solar Production facility (solar farm) was completed and commissioned on March 28, 2011. This 2.2 megawatt photo-voltaic facility, located on a 17-acre farm on our campus is already producing green energy that is consumed by UMES. It is estimated that it will produce 3,000 megawatt hours annually and will account for about 10% of UMES’ annual electricity usage. To date this facility has produced more than 6,900 megawatt hours of electricity. UMES is actively discussing with the USM more opportunities to participate in Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects in green energy generation that will include more solar and wind sources.

UMES continues to build, renovate and operate facilities that are sustainable and energy efficient. In 2011, Somerset Hall, a 64 year old building renovated in August 2010 that houses the Doctor of Pharmacy program, received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. The planned Engineering & Aviation Science building is designed to be LEED Gold certified when completed. Wicomico Hall, a residential dormitory renovated in August, 2010, utilized geothermal energy system in heating and cooling of the building. This innovative energy efficient system is being replicated in new capital projects. UMES has successful energy conservation programs with focus on efficient building and lighting systems leading to the replacement of older heating, ventilation, and air condition (HVAC) systems and equipment, replacement of metal halide light fixtures with LED fixtures, thus reducing energy consumption in facilities and the institution’s carbon footprint. The use of hybrid/flex fueled vehicles, procurement of energy star products, and the use of environmentally friendly housekeeping products are part of the UMES campus e-operation.
UMES has active research programs that focus on: (1) Center for the Integrated Study of Coastal Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and (2) Carbon Capture Research. The Center for the Integrated Study of Coastal Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics in the Mid-Atlantic Region, funded by the National Science Foundation’s CREST (Center for Research Excellence in Science and Technology), recruits, mentors and educates undergraduate and graduate students, particularly members of the underrepresented minorities while conducting research on impacts of climate change on biodiversity in the mid-Atlantic Region.

UMES secured $245,000 in external funds in January 2011 from the U.S. Department of Education to establish a laboratory of carbon management in which the carbon capture research will be conducted. The goal of the UMES carbon capture research is to develop a novel method for capturing carbon. Carbon sequestration is generally considered the most effective means of reducing emissions of the greenhouse gas, CO\textsubscript{2}, from large point sources and the first step to sequestration is the capture of CO\textsubscript{2}. Faculty and students are currently conducting research on algae-based carbon capture. Sustainability education and curriculum enhancements are already taking place in the Construction Management program, and such improvements are widely considered in the School of Business and Technology.

Climate Change Initiatives are part of the UMES Campus Master Plan program approved by the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents, and the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan includes goals to sustain the reduction of the campus carbon footprint.

THE NEED FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT

USM and UMES are committed to meeting the state’s goals related to increasing the number of graduates, particularly in the STEM and health care disciplines as well as increasing entrepreneurial and workforce development. Continued investment from Maryland’s General Assembly will allow UMES to remain a driving force in rural economic and diversified workforce development.

Each institution within USM, with its own distinct mission, will continue to make the state a leader in higher education. With the enhanced funding requested, UMES is poised to play an even greater role.

On behalf of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, I am proud to be a member of the nation’s best higher education system, the University System of Maryland, and I urge your support of the Governor’s budget.

Thank you.

Juliette B. Bell, Ph.D.
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RESPONSES TO DLS RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR COMMENT

Response to USM recommended reductions:

DLS recommends reducing USM’s fiscal 2014 general fund appropriation made for the purpose to fund CSC [Current Services Costs] by $10 million.

DLS also recommends reducing USM’s fiscal 2014 general fund appropriation by $8 million.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore opposes both recommendations to reduce FY 14 appropriations to USM. A reduction in our appropriation for current services would have a detrimental effect on UMES’ ability to provide basic services and support as well as cover mandatory costs. In addition, our ability to increase financial aid to students would be severely limited. A reduction of $8 million provided in the Governor’s Allowance for USM programmatic enhancements would limit UMES’ ability to make progress on critical priorities, including efforts to increase our graduation rates and contribute to the state’s priority of increasing the number of adult Marylanders with college degrees. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore proposes to use its share of the enhancement funding to focus on the following University areas: closing the achievement gap, increasing students in STEM programs, academic transformation, and the initial phase of the 1890 land-grant matching funds.

DLS also recommends restricting the remaining $14.9 million of USM’s fiscal 2014 appropriation for program enhancement until USM submits a report detailing specifically how these funds will be used and metrics that will be used to measure the progress or results of the activities funded with State funds.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore fully supports accountability measures and would accept appropriate performance metrics and reporting requirements for any enhancement funds provided.
ISSUE #1: MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

Question 1.
The President should comment on whether any effects other than the recent recession had an impact on the declining graduation rates at UMES.

Yes, there are other effects that have had an impact on the university’s declining graduation rates and the university is currently assessing the extent to which these factors have impacted graduation rates. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of these factors, along with key efforts underway at UMES to increase retention and graduation rates, and overall student success:

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES
UMES is taking a sobering assessment of its academic policies and practices to determine what needs to be improved to increase student success. For example, we are reviewing the average course loads, course planning schedules, and addressing practices to see how these impact graduation rates. Further, the university’s academic advising system needs to be bolstered to improve the quality of academic advising. This will be done through enhanced training and routine assessment of our advising methods. The university’s retention plan, interrupted by university leadership changes and staff turnover, will be fully implemented.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION
Many of the university’s students come to the university underprepared for the academic rigors of college coursework. In order to impact this area, the following efforts are underway:

• First Year Seminars (including Transfer Student Seminars) – These small, highly interactive academic courses enable new freshmen and transfers to develop strong relationships with faculty.

• Center for Access and Academic Success – Incoming freshmen and current students find community, resources, and support throughout their academic year, including a summer bridge program and co-curricular activities.

• First Year Intervention – This systematic, early-warning system helps students find the help they need early in the semester when intervention is most effective.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
Many university students continue to struggle with coursework, particularly mathematics. To that end, the university has recently redesigned the introductory math courses in order to improve student academic performance in this critical area. Other efforts include:

• Learning Resources Center, Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction – We provide these resources to help students in particular academic areas, both when they encounter academic difficulty and when they wish to improve an already solid grade.

• Course Redesign – With great success, we have been redesigning introductory and gateway courses to improve student learning and outcomes. In fact, we are attracting national attention for our efforts.

Addendum 2
Despite the recession, UMES students still have great financial need. Sixty-one percent (61%) of students are Pell-eligible, which means that the majority of our students may face financial hardships as they seek to complete their college education. We see that the majority of issues that prompt our students to “stop-out,” “drop-out,” and lengthen their time-to-degree completion are financially-related (i.e., unpaid back bills, not enough financial aid, etc.). Recessions only compound those existing conditions.

To that end, we will continue to seek additional private resources to provide need-based student scholarships and will also educate our students about the long-term impact of loan debt incurred as a result of financing their education.

**Question 2.**
**The President should comment on why so little institutional aid is going to students in the Pell +$1 to $6,999 EFC group.**

The university is particularly sensitive to the financial needs of its students. More than half of all UMES students qualify for federal Pell grants (61%). With such a high number of needy students and limited financial resources to award institutional grants, UMES uses the expected family contribution (EFC) as calculated on the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a guideline to awarding need-based grants, similar to the manner in which the U.S. Department of Education determines federal Pell grant eligibility.

Due to the economy and significant changes in many family’s financial situations, such as unemployment, layoffs and/or underemployment, eligibility for the federal Pell grant has increased. While UMES continues to increase its commitment to need-based institutional aid, the pool of qualified students has increased disproportionately to the amount of funds available for institutional aid. Because the EFC is a good indicator of a family’s ability to pay for college, institutional need-based aid is directed to those with lowest EFC’s first (the neediest students). Funds are simply not available for students in higher EFC ranges, particularly those just over the EFC threshold for Pell grant eligibility. While these students and their families demonstrate financial need, they do not qualify for federal Pell grant. In order to be fair and equitable, UMES uses the EFC and federal Pell grant eligibility as general criteria for awarding institutional aid. Merit aid does not consider EFC or Pell grant eligibility.

**Question 3.**
**The President should comment on what UMES is doing to increase financial aid literacy and responsible borrowing among new students, given that in some EFC ranges, students are taking out very high private loans relative to other loan types.**

Student loan borrowing, repayment and default prevention are of great concern to the institution. UMES emphasizes conservative borrowing, responsibility for repayment, and the consequences of default at every available opportunity. These efforts have been increased over the past few years due to an initiative, Financial Literacy is Paramount for Success (FLIPS), implemented for the 2011-2012 academic year. The FLIPS initiative, a peer-led financial literacy program, is aimed at increasing students' financial literacy knowledge.
UMES was selected by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and USA Funds to send a team of administrators to several workshops and symposia over the course of three years, that concentrated on providing financial literacy education to students. The university selected representatives from Administrative Affairs, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Residence Life, and Student Activities to participate in these workshops/symposia. The overall goal of the team was to develop a concrete plan for providing financial literacy education to its students.

FLIPS began, in part, due to a grant received from USA Funds. UMES received a $25,000 grant from USA Funds to select and hire peer educators, and provide resources for the FLIPS program. Ten of UMES’ best and brightest students were selected and trained to administer this program. These peer educators provided valuable financial literacy education sessions and seminars in all sections of UMES’ First Year Experience classes, in every residence hall, and in other venues across campus. These sessions/seminars included topics such as conservative student loan borrowing, the responsibility of student loan repayment, and the consequences of defaulting on federal student loans. Informational sessions were also conducted on topics such as understanding your FICO score, managing and avoiding credit card debt, and interest rates and investing.

The USA Funds grant was renewed for the 2012-2013 academic year. UMES is committed to continuing delivery of the FLIPS program to students beyond the 2012-2013 academic year. UMES believes that financial literacy education is key for helping students understand the need for fiscal responsibility. With the implementation of the online Entrance Counseling by the U.S. Department of Education, face-to-face entrance counseling sessions are now obsolete. This lack of personal counseling prior to borrowing may be a detriment to conservative borrowing. However, students who request increased student loans, particularly unsubsidized loans, are required to meet with a financial aid advisor and complete a loan request form. These students are cautioned about excess borrowing and accumulation of interest on unsubsidized loans. However, with the economic downturn, UMES has seen an increase in requests for maximum student loans as students and their families struggle to meet the costs of higher education.

The Office of Student Financial Aid is also emphasizing financial literacy through several outreach efforts. UMES has conducted financial aid and literacy workshops at six local high schools in four counties. These workshops prepare high school seniors to navigate the financial aid process and provide hands-on assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. In January 2013, over 90 students and their parents, representing 50 families attended one of these sessions in Dorchester county. These sessions and workshops were also conducted in several area churches, for the Upward Bound Program participants at UMES, and other civic organizations.

The Office of Student Financial Aid also participated in an annual scholarship/financial aid fair sponsored by the Delmarva Education Foundation held at the Centre at Salisbury in January 2013. This fair was designed to provide exposure to several scholarship awarding agencies as well as provide valuable information on navigating the financial aid process. UMES financial aid personnel assisted in manning the general information table.

Addendum 4
ISSUE #2: ACCESS AND SUCCESS PROGRAM REVIEW

Question 4.
The President should comment on whether stronger outcomes should be expected of SEA participants and why so many students do not succeed in math courses even when they have specialized summer programs and targeted resources at their disposal.

We have high expectations of our students, and we will continue to challenge and support our students during their tenure at UMES. With regard to our Summer Enrichment Academy (SEA) students, we have outlined some pretty strong outcome expectations and many students have risen to meet these expectations. Since its inception in 2008, no SEA cohort has completed the program with less than 75% of the cohort passing developmental math. In fact, the SEA program boasts a mean passing average of 82%. This rate is higher when compared to the general population average rate of 67%. We need more resources to make SEA available to more incoming freshmen than is currently the case.

While we continue to see many of our SEA students excel at developmental math, we are painfully aware that many students entering UMES continue to struggle with math in general. Although this problem is not unique to UMES, we are committed to making significant inroads into this matter and yielding a higher completion and success rate for our developmental math students.

One of the primary reasons so many students do not succeed in developmental math is because they are ill prepared for the rigors of math at the higher education level. However, we have found that incoming freshmen who participate in developmental math during SEA, tend to complete the course with a higher success rate than incoming freshmen who take developmental math but do not participate in SEA. It appears the academic and co-academic structural design of SEA, i.e., mandatory tutoring, study skills development, and supplemental instruction, lends itself to the reinforcing and strengthening of students' cognitive foundation as it relates to the fundamentals of mathematics.

We have not historically applied the aforementioned academic and co-academic structural design to our regular 15 week developmental math course. As a result, freshmen who enter UMES with weak math skills and test into developmental math take the course absent the reinforcement and mandatory requirements that are part of SEA. Having learned from this, during fall 2012, we conducted a “Course Redesign” for all developmental math courses. These courses will now include a mandatory academic and co-academic structure mirroring that of the SEA program.

Question 5.
The President should comment on why enrollment has dropped so much in SEA and whether UMES plans to enroll more summer bridge students in fiscal 2014.

It should be noted that there is no enrollment decline in the Summer Enrichment Academy (SEA) program. Enrollment in SEA has fluctuated each year since the inception of the program – 66 students (2008), 75 students (2009), 59 students (2010), 57 students (2011), and 91 students (2012).

There is a decline in the Access & Success (A&S) cohort which has been erroneously combined with the SEA cohort in Exhibit 12 on page 20 of the analyst’s report, “Performance Difference of Bulldog Academy Versus All First-year Students Fiscal 2011-2012.” This decline is driven by a change in the criteria to identify and select the A&S cohort.
After 2008, UMES adjusted the criteria to exclude students who did not use A&S programs/services or participate in the SEA program. In an effort to ensure we captured a more accurate A&S cohort the criteria was revised to only include students who participate in the SEA program, and students defined by the College Student Inventory (CSI) as “At-Risk” and report to the Center for Access and Academic Success (CAAS) to develop academic plans of action and implement said plans.

SEA is a residential program designed to enhance the academic and social development of incoming freshmen prior to the start of the fall academic year. SEA accepts up to 100 students, and this comprehensive six-week residential program allows students to earn six credit hours (3 Math, and 3 English), and helps prepare students for the academic rigors of college. In 2012, SEA enrolled its largest cohort in the program’s history, 91, an enrollment increase of 37% from the previous year. UMES plans to enroll up to 100 SEA students in fiscal 2014.

ISSUE #3: INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS DEFICIT

Question 6.
The President should comment on the findings of the football task force and whether UMES plans to pursue a formal NCAA football program at this time.

The University has accepted recommendations by a task force appointed this past fall to evaluate an independent consultant’s findings on the pros and cons of reinstating football.

The university is not currently in position, with either human or fiscal resources, to reinstate football at this time. Rather, the university will focus on the following, as recommended by the task force:

1. Stabilizing and balancing the athletic budget using such measures as cost containment and fund raising,
2. Conducting an in-house review within three years to determine if enough progress has been made that would position the university to reconsider the subject in five years, and
3. Continuing to support club football as a way to maintain enthusiasm and school spirit.

Question 7.
The President should comment on whether the amount of auxiliary support for ICA is on target for fiscal 2013 and how UMES is raising the $672,000 needed to meet the auxiliary reduction goal in fiscal 2014.

Yes, UMES is on target with its projection on the amount of auxiliary support for FY 2013. UMES has implemented a two-pronged approach to the reduction of the auxiliary program support for intercollegiate athletics. First, we have reduced operating expenditures in the areas of personnel, travel, and other operating expenditures, which will yield an expected reduction in excess of $175,000. Secondly, revenue has been increased by more than $200,000 with an increase in game guarantee revenue and a $50 increase in the athletic fee in FY 2013.

Addendum 6
UMES plans to increase its athletic fee by $150 in each of the next two years, FY 2014 and FY 2015. For FY 2014, UMES will continue its cost cutting efforts, funding for game guarantees, and a transfer of funds from other auxiliary programs. In FY 2015, the athletic program will be in full compliance with the University System of Maryland Board of Regents policy on intercollegiate athletics.

ISSUE #4: REPEAT AUDIT FINDINGS

RECOMMENDED ACTION

DLS recommends that $100,000 in funding be withheld in UMES’ operating budget until OLA has determined that the repeat audit findings have been corrected.

While the University of Maryland Eastern Shore is also concerned about the number and frequency of repeat findings in audits conducted by the Office of Legislative Audits (OLA), and fully supports the application of accountability measures, we disagree with this recommendation. UMES has always taken these audits very seriously, especially repeat items, and has worked diligently to correct these exceptions. On February 1, 2013, the University System of Maryland Office of Internal Audit issued a Legislative Audit follow-up report on the financial findings and found that for both repeat items (Findings 4 and 5) corrective actions have been fully implemented. An August 15, 2012 review found that the IT Finding 7 has also been fully corrected. As indicated in the analyst’s report, UMES has dedicated the majority of its enhancement funding, over $1 million in FY2013, to provide critical IT upgrades. For the IT Finding 8, corrective actions have begun. The servers have been moved behind the firewall and equipment has been ordered. Due to the extensive nature of the corrective actions needed, this Finding cannot be fully corrected until August 1, 2014 as stated in the original response. Since these items have been corrected, funds should not be withheld.