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# 2025

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## TESTIMONY TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE FY 2026 OPERATING BUDGET FOR UMES

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

**DR. HEIDI M. ANDERSON  
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE**

# GREETINGS & OVERVIEW

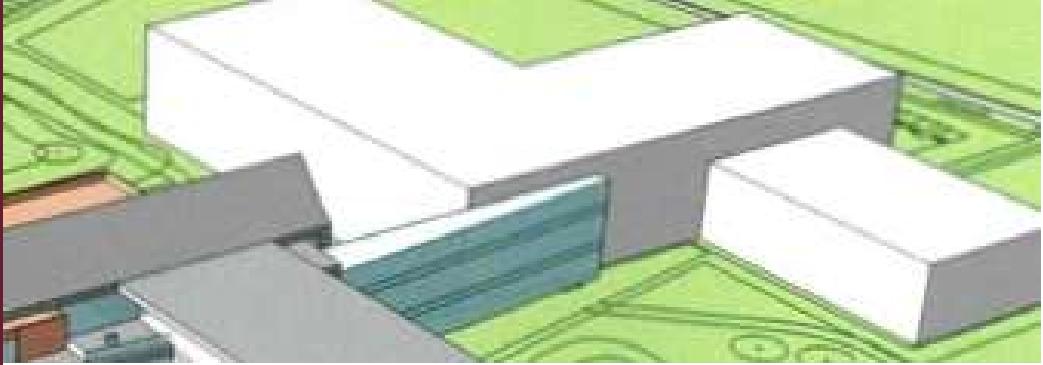
On behalf of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), we would like to thank Governor Wes Moore, Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, Senate President Bill Ferguson, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Chair Guy Guzzone and the subcommittee Chair of Education, Business and Administration Nancy King, Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones, House Appropriations Committee Chair Ben Barnes, and the subcommittee Chair of House Education and Economic Development Stephanie Smith.

For 2025, UMES is requesting **\$161,000,000** in State funding to support construction of a 175,886 gsf facility on campus for veterinary studies and health professions. This is the second phase of a two-building **Veterinary Medicine and Health Professions complex**.

Currently, health profession services are spread throughout campus; this project will consolidate these programs into a single complex. UMES' health profession programs include:

- Physical Therapy
- Rehabilitation Services
- Rehabilitation Counseling
- Rehabilitative Psychology
- Kinesiology
- Physician Assistant

The new building will house the Physical Therapy, Rehab, and Kinesiology Programs; the Pharmacy and Physician Assistant Programs are in the current Phase I building.



## PROPOSED SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMPLEX

The UMES vision is to build a world-class veterinary educational program – the only one in Maryland – to serve as a hub for veterinary innovation, research and community outreach for the state and beyond.

One of the greatest challenges facing Maryland's rural and underserved communities is a lack of access to veterinary care. The school's commitment to community outreach and extension services will help fill this gap, ensuring that all animals, from pets to livestock, receive the care they need.

The UMES School of Veterinary Medicine is committed to providing the highest level of animal care, research and service to advance the health of animals, humans, and the environment. To meet this immense and growing need for our economy and our residents, the School of Veterinary Medicine needs the proper infrastructure and facilities.

**THIS PROJECT WILL PROVIDE MODERN ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL SPACE AND ALLOW THE UNIVERSITY TO COMPLY WITH ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS SO THAT UMES CAN EXPAND ITS VETERINARY AND HEALTH SCIENCES PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE EASTERN SHORE REGION.**



*Dr. Stanley Robertson is the first Dean of UMES' School of Veterinary Medicine. He most recently served as a professor and Associate Dean of Clinical Relations at the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine.*

UMES currently has more than 80 students majoring in pre-vet undergraduate studies, including:

### DONOVAN GRADY

**Senior from Salisbury**

First recipient of the Diversify Veterinary Medicine Coalition Scholarship. Has participated in summer pre-vet programs at the University of California - Davis and Purdue University VetUp College. Serves as president of the Pre-Vet Club and treasurer of Stemfluencer. Also involved as a member with Future Leaders in Agriculture, USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum and MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) at UMES.



### KAILA TYREE-CASTRO

**Sophomore from Prince Georges County**

Has a 3.8 GPA. Is the second recipient of the Diversify Veterinary Medicine Coalition Scholarship and a Land Grant Scholar at UMES. Has participated in summer pre-vet programs at the University of California - Davis, Purdue University VetUp College and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Serves as vice president of UMES' Pre-Vet Club.



### TYLER SIMMONS

**Sophomore from Prince Georges County**

Serves as president of UMES' MANRRS chapter and has participated in MANRRS summer animal health care academy program. Also accepted in summer pre-vet programs at the University of California - Davis and Purdue University VetUp College. Is a Land Grant Scholar at UMES and member of the Richard A. Henson Honors program.



# RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND  
FISCAL 2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

DR. HEIDI M. ANDERSON  
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE  
FEBRUARY 14, 2025



From Page 7

## Question: The President should discuss UMES' strategies to improve graduation rates.

UMES is constantly reviewing and evaluating options to improve graduation rates. One strategy the University implemented last fall is our Student Success Strategic Plan. This plan focuses on improving persistence, retention, and on-time graduation rates. The strategies that are currently being employed include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring students are enrolled in 15 hours per semester
- Providing financial assistance and financial literacy workshops for both parents and students who are experiencing financial difficulties
- Enhancing student and faculty use of the Starfish student monitoring platform to address academic and non-academic matters in a timely manner
- Increasing the number of students who utilize tutoring services
- Leveraging the winter and summer sessions and the 8-week sessions in the spring and fall terms to help students get back on track and progress with their cohort

In addition to this plan, UMES has an initiative that targets stop-out students. This initiative focuses on addressing the barriers that precluded students from attaining their degree. We believe this will help improve our six-year graduation rate.

From Page 10

## Question: UMES should discuss the reason for the increased focus on merit scholarships compared to need-based aid in fiscal 2024 and whether this is expected to continue.

In fiscal year 2024, UMES experienced 11% student enrollment growth and made significant investments in our scholarship programs, resulting in an increase in institutional aid expenditures. This growth reflects our commitment to both expanding access to higher education and fostering academic excellence.

Need-based aid remains an essential priority for UMES; however, the noticeable increase in merit scholarship funding in 2024 was driven by several key factors, including new opportunities for federal and grant funding, particularly the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) grant. The HHMI grant enabled the University to launch the STEM Stars Program in 2024, a unique initiative designed to support academically talented students who are pursuing careers in STEM fields. This program, which was not in place in 2023, contributed significantly to the increased focus on merit scholarships. The STEM Stars Program not only strengthens the University's STEM offerings, but also supports the development of a diverse and highly qualified talent pool, which will benefit the state of Maryland in the long term.

Participants in UMES' Richard A. Henson Honors Program also increased in 2024. The University's strategic investment in these programs underscores our commitment to providing opportunities for high-achieving students from a variety of backgrounds, ensuring that we remain competitive in attracting top talent. The University remains dedicated to maintaining a balanced approach, ensuring that both need-based and merit-based aid are available to meet the diverse needs of our student population. We believe that providing a robust mix of financial aid options is key to achieving our goal of fostering student success, enhancing academic outcomes, and contributing to the intellectual and economic growth of our region and beyond.

## ABOUT UMES

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) was founded in 1886 and is a historically Black, Carnegie-classified doctoral research, land-grant institution offering more than 90 academic programs and concentrations leading to degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctorate.

UMES provides affordable access to higher education while driving innovation in fields like agriculture, science, engineering, and aviation. For more information, visit [www.umes.edu](http://www.umes.edu).



# RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

CONTINUED

From Page 13

**Question: UMES should discuss why spending on scholarships and fellowships is expected to drop by 24% in fiscal 2025.**

The amount budgeted for scholarships and fellowships is the same for FY24 and FY25. UMES spent \$1.1 million more from the HBCU Settlement in FY24 on scholarships than anticipated.

For both FY24 and FY25, UMES did not budget for a USM Debt Release Scholarship amount of \$856,617. The combination accounts for the \$1.9 million difference.



From Page 15

**Question: The President should comment on how the institution will address the reduction in State support.**

To meet a loss of \$3.6 million in State support, UMES is reducing self-funded facilities renewal, reducing part-time personnel both in and out of the classroom, and is not filling certain full-time vacancies.

- Reduction in self-funded facilities renewal: \$2 million
- Reduction in part-time positions: \$660,969
- Not hiring full-time vacant positions: \$1 million



From Page 18

**Question: The President should comment on the high vacancy rate, efforts to reduce vacant positions, and the effect that the vacancies are having on the college's ability to meet its goals.**

UMES has historically had difficulty filling positions due to locale. To combat the turnover and vacancies, UMES has had to offer competitive salaries and provide retention compensation. The vacancies and turnover make it difficult to provide proper attention to all of the actions necessary to achieve full and timely implementation of all University goals. However, UMES gets much more accomplished than many larger universities.



## UMES' MISSION

As a public 1890 land-grant Historically Black University that embraces diversity, UMES is committed to serving first-generation and underserved students and providing educational, research, and community engagement opportunities to transform the lives of its students who will impact the state, the region, and the world.

## UMES' VISION

UMES will be the preeminent public Historically Black University that is recognized for leadership in student-centered education, exceptional research, innovation, and inclusiveness.

## UMES' ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$225.7**  
**MILLION**  
TOTAL ECONOMIC  
IMPACT

**1,737**  
**JOBs**  
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
IMPACT

**\$1.5**  
**BILLION**  
TOTAL LIFETIME  
EARNINGS OF  
GRADUATES

SOURCE: UNCF 2024 HBCU IMPACT REPORT