



Guidelines on Public Comment at Board Meetings

The 2019 University System of Maryland Board of Regents Transparency and Oversight Bill requires that the board “shall allow time at each open meeting for public comment.”

The Board Bylaws currently allow for public comment and require submission of requests to the Chancellor at least 48 hours prior to a board meeting. USM employee requests are considered by the Chancellor; requests by non-USM employees are submitted to the Chancellor and acted upon by the Board Chair (the Chair may deny, refer to committee, or recognize the request). The current Bylaws do not provide for time during Board meetings for public comment.

The following procedures are recommended to facilitate an orderly and efficient public comment period during open meetings of the Board of Regents:

1. At each meeting of the Board, the agenda will provide 15 minutes for public comment on topics included in the current meeting agenda. The period for public comment will precede the consent agenda and committee reports in order to afford the speaker(s) the opportunity to be heard prior to Board action or discussion on an agenda item. This portion of the agenda is designated for comments from the public and, as such, the Board will listen but not engage in debate.
2. A speakers’ sign-up list will be available 15 minutes prior to the start of each Board meeting and will close once the meeting begins. Individuals who wish to make public comments must sign the speakers’ sign-up list and include their name, email address, and the subject matter that will be addressed. Ordinarily, speakers will be allowed to speak in the order in which they sign-up, but the Board Chair may elect to group speakers by subject matter.
3. Each speaker will have three minutes to address the Board.
4. Public comments should not address personnel matters or complaints about individuals. The Board Chair has the discretion to interrupt a speaker in the event the individual’s remarks are disruptive or lack public decorum. The Board Chair also may refer topics to the Chancellor for investigation and follow-up.
5. Public comments should address only topics on the current agenda. To address the Board on a topic that is not on the current agenda, please send an email to Regents@usmd.edu.
6. The Board Chair may waive or modify any of the Guidelines on Public Comment during Board Meetings, balancing the efficient operations of the Board and the Board’s desire to provide an opportunity for meaningful public input into matters under consideration by the Board.