



USM Student Council June 2025 Report to the USM Board of Regents

Good morning Chair Gooden, Chancellor Perman, the Board of Regents, and University Presidents,

We started the month of May with USMSC elections, and I am excited to share the 2025-26 executive team:

President: Jefferson Vasquez-Reyes, University of Maryland, College Park
Vice President of Graduate Affairs: Harshal Chauhan, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Vice President of Undergraduate Affairs: Princess Nyamali, Universities at Shady Grove-UMBC

On May 18th, 12 student awardees were celebrated for the Board of Regents Student Excellence Scholarship. Thank you Chancellor Perman and Chair Gooden for awarding the students, and thank you Regent Wood and all the presidents who were able to attend and support the awardees.

With this being my last report to the Board of Regents, I want to express gratitude to everyone for two years of leadership as chair and four years overall with the USMSC. I joined the council my first year of college and rapidly saw how rewarding and impactful student leadership can be. I am grateful to Dr. Lee and Dr. Wrynn for supporting and mentoring the USMSC at every step, Dr. Haverback and Dr. Patricio for all the moments we have collaborated together, whether Advocacy Day or our Joint Council meetings, and Student Regents Josiah Parker and Dhuvak Mirani for bringing the voice of the Board of Regents to our council meetings. And finally, eternal gratitude to Chancellor Perman for continuously supporting students with your time, attention, and care in various forms—from Chancellor’s Chats to conversations at our general meetings. This time we have gotten with you means more than we can express, and it will continue to be something the council cherishes.

Reflecting on two years of leadership as Chair, I am proud of all the steps forward, such as the BOR Student Excellence Scholarships, Student Speaker Forum, and USMSC newsletter system. But I am probably proudest of the engagement when moments were tougher, unpredictable, and not in unison—the dedication and insight of each student leader that enabled us to navigate more complex or sometimes controversial topics through collaborative dialogue.

Looking ahead, we want to further work on strengthening communication by making the newsletters more regular, hopefully launching a USM101 retreat for council members to get students more acquainted with the system and administration, and restructuring our meetings to better emphasize the distinct voices of undergraduate and graduate students. I am in contact with the incoming leadership on these points and hope to support them with that transition.

Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

Vainavi Gambhir
President, University System of Maryland Student Council



Recommendations to the USM Based on the 2025 USMSC Shared Governance Survey

Background and Context

- Heard from graduate and/or undergrad reps at five institutions; since not fully representative and includes inconsistencies in responses, there are no rating averages or declarative findings to share
- Approaching the sharing of information as recommendations that could be helpful across the board as encouragement to continue the work already happening or as ideas for consideration by the BOR, Chancellor and USM team, Presidents and their teams, as well as the next USMSC administration
- Offering recommendations based on overall comments about shared governance and also from sections of the report, which were Communication, Interactions with Administrators, Decision Making, Meet and Confer (graduate representatives only), and Student Fees

Overall Takeaways and Recommendations

1. Respondents almost universally said that administrators are accessible to meet and discuss student concerns with student leadership; this is working well!
2. Consider formal ways to ensure students know their feedback is seriously being considered and not just sought to check a box. May develop ways to ensure follow up.
3. Help ensure student leaders know what shared governance and meet and confer (for graduate students) are and what they look like at each institution, which may not be as clear as assumed.
4. Meet and confer guidelines and processes should be developed or reviewed with student leadership when new graduate student government administrations are elected and at least once or twice during the year. This was an area of pretty consistent calls for more structure, clarity, information, and improvement.
5. Respondents generally felt positive about being included in student fee conversations, but they are, again, uncertain about how seriously their concerns are taken and may benefit from more transparency and discussion when and if their ideas are not accepted.
6. Develop or continue strengthening processes to onboard student leaders to their rights and responsibilities to and with university officials and functions.
7. Ensure graduate student government bodies are as well informed about and integrated into these functions as the undergraduate student governments.

Closing Thoughts

Overall, while student leaders mostly agreed there were opportunities to meet with senior administrators, they requested more structure and clarity in onboarding and responsibilities and greater follow-up on the issues that are raised. I will encourage the incoming USMSC administration to take these recommendations and use them as the basis for discussions and professional development with the representatives. We hope our council can continue serving as a space for open dialogue between student leaders, and that these recommendations can encourage deeper dialogue with campus administration about how shared governance is manifested at USM institutions.

Vainavi Gambhir
President, USM Student Council