

Letters to the UMB Community

Leadership Transition

To the UMB Community:

I have two important announcements to share regarding my transition into the chancellorship of the University System of Maryland (USM). The USM Board of Regents has [set my start date](#) in the position as Jan. 6, 2020. I know this is earlier than anticipated, but Chancellor Robert Caret, PhD, has announced his intention to step down from the role on that day.

Additionally, Chancellor Caret, with approval of the regents, has [named Executive Vice President and Provost Bruce Jarrell, MD, FACS, interim president of UMB](#), effective Jan. 6. I couldn't be happier that Bruce has agreed to take on this job, and I know I couldn't leave the University in better hands.

I've worked with Dr. Jarrell for 20 years now. When I came to UMB in 1999 as chair of the Department of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine, he was my colleague, chair of the school's Department of Surgery, and we got to know each other well.

I began working even more closely with Dr. Jarrell in 2012, when I appointed him UMB's chief academic and research officer, and dean of the Graduate School. In that role, Dr. Jarrell promoted UMB's expansive agendas in education, research, clinical care, and public service. He oversaw many of our most prominent relationships with institutions inside and outside USM, such as the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: *MPowering the State*.

It's no coincidence that UMB's prestige grew with Dr. Jarrell's leadership. By focusing not only on our own work but on our work with a growing number of high-profile partners whom he cultivated, Dr. Jarrell helped set a direction and a pace of progress for UMB that will certainly endure after my departure.

When, five years later in 2017, I named Dr. Jarrell executive vice president and provost, I said the move was long overdue. I knew that as UMB took on significant statewide leadership through interinstitutional collaboration, as we continued to expand our responsibilities within the region's academic community, I would depend on Dr. Jarrell's expertise and guiding hand more than ever. And I have. I've depended, as well, on him nurturing and overseeing UMB's many global programs in education, research, and service.

What I can say with conviction is that Dr. Jarrell will not be a "caretaker" president. He has a vision for UMB, and he has bold ideas to make it real. He's told me that stagnation to any degree would be a disservice to our students and to the state. If a university isn't evolving, isn't growing—in its ambitions, its mission, its scholarship and service—it will languish. And UMB will *not* languish under Dr. Jarrell.

Certainly, Dr. Jarrell's selection as interim president is good news for UMB's students. I've seen his connection with students. It's among them that he's happiest and most animated, and he always makes time in his overcrowded schedule to talk with them, to find out what's going well in their studies and what's not. Like me, Dr. Jarrell attended college on scholarships, and I know higher education access and affordability will be among his top priorities. Another priority will be championing excellence in teaching; given Dr. Jarrell's long history as an excellent teacher himself, he's well positioned to make significant strides here.

While I'm excited for this transition, I do regret that my start date doesn't give me much time to say goodbye. And so I hope you'll join me on **Thursday, Dec. 12, at 4 p.m.**, for a farewell celebration at the SMC Campus Center. All are welcome, and you don't need to RSVP to attend. There will be no long speeches, I promise, just a chance to say "until we meet again," because we will—assuredly—meet again.

Sincerely,

Jay A. Perman, MD
President