



April 16, 2015

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor of the State of Maryland
Executive Offices
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

As chair of the Towson University Board of Visitors, I am pleased to report to you on the university's successes during fiscal year 2014. The university has many reasons to be proud at all levels: academic and athletic, on campus and in the community, involving students, faculty, staff and friends of the university. Below, I share with you only a few of the accomplishments that make this university such a valued part of the state.

Myrna Cardin '65
Chair

Board of Visitors
Towson University
8000 York Road

Towson, MD 21252-0001

The university once again claimed distinctions in trusted resources for college-bound students and their parents. "U.S. News & World Report" named Towson one of the best public regional universities in the north and one of the region's best in fiscal management; the university also earned accolades as one of the best schools in the region for veterans, ranking first in the University System of Maryland for veterans' services. "Princeton Review" named Towson University in its guide to green colleges, and "Forbes" named the university one of America's top colleges in 2013. "Kiplinger's Personal Finance" recognized the university as one of the best values in public colleges. "G.I. Jobs Magazine" once again named Towson a military friendly school.

Our students proved worthy of high praise with national achievements. Physics major Zoey Warecki won the 2014 Outstanding Student Award for Undergraduate Research from the National Society of Physics Students, American Institute of Physics, and was one of only two college students in the country to represent the United States in the International Conference of Physics Students in Heidelberg, Germany. Theatre students Jenna Rossman and Caitlin Weaver were regional finalists in the prestigious Kennedy Center American Theatre Festival's Irene Ryan Acting Scholarships. For the third time in four years, Towson's team won the Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition. Debaters Ameena Ruffin and Korey Johnson became the first black women to win the Cross Examination Debate Association national championship. The Student Government Association's "What's Your Stand?" video about the value of diversity won national recognition from two professional communication organizations.



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Between our winter and spring commencements in FY14, we proudly conferred degrees to 5,109 students we are now delighted to call Towson University alumni as they begin their careers. More than 70 percent of our alumni remain in Maryland to live and work, contributing to the state's economic and cultural landscape.

Towson University's endowment benefitted in FY14 from development efforts that surpassed goals, culminating in more than \$8.6 million in donated funds to support the institution. This achievement was more than \$1.1 million over the Division of Advancement's FY14 goal of \$7.5 million. Support from our donors enables the university to provide a wide range of critical financial aid for students in need, technology upgrades, forward-thinking educational facilities, materials, enrichment, professional development for faculty, and scholarships for deserving students.

In December 2013, the university announced eight intended education majors who received scholarships from renowned mystery author and champion of early reading education, James Patterson. These scholarships are renewable throughout the students' four years at Towson University, provided they meet requirements for academic achievement and maintain their desire to be teachers. In June 2014, Mr. Patterson repeated his gift to another eight incoming freshmen. With a total of 16 scholarships to date, the goal for the program is 32 renewable scholarships. Mr. Patterson's unsolicited recognition of Towson University's rich tradition in teacher preparation is both a rewarding acknowledgement of 150 years in education excellence and a tremendous opportunity for those who receive this generous scholarship.

FY14 also saw the beginning of the first-ever middle school teacher preparation major in a public Maryland institution. The new program made Towson University fully comprehensive in its offerings for teacher preparedness from early childhood through high school, and with attention to special education needs as well as certification for educators with expertise in autism. Other programs achieved special distinction; the Actuarial Science and Risk Management program was named a Center of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries, a distinction earned by only 15 institutions nationwide. Continuing our passionate commitment to the arts, the Theatre program celebrated its 50th year at Towson.



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Our faculty continued to deliver exceptional service, expertise, innovation and research to our students, the community, and the state. Computer and Information Sciences Professor Jonathan Lazar secured a U.S. patent for the SoundsRight CAPTCHA system, critically updating the technology used to tell humans and computers apart for individuals with vision impairments who cannot discern the text images used in traditional CAPTCHA systems.

Sean McComb, an adjunct instructor in the College of Education, was named 2014 National Teacher of the Year and recognized by the President of the United States in a spring ceremony at the White House.

Family Studies Assistant Professor Sharon Jones-Eversley won a distinguished PRIDE Award from the National Institutes of Health, providing her two years of support to conduct potentially transformative research on cardiovascular health disparities in the African-American community.

Biological Sciences Professor Sarah Haines received a 2014 USM Regents' Faculty Award for Public Service, recognizing her work with the Chesapeake Bay Trust; Taiwan's Environmental Education Specialist Group; the Chesapeake Bay Center for Innovation's Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibility leadership council; and the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature—a post to which she was appointed by Governor Martin O'Malley in 2008.

Additionally, Anthropology Professor Vic Fisher celebrated an astonishing 50 years on the university's faculty. Dr. Fisher's unyielding dedication to the university garnered warm congratulations and kind messages from current and former students, as well as the deep respect and admiration of his colleagues.

Community commitment remains an integral part of Towson University's mission. In May 2014, the annual Big Event drew more than 1,200 students to clean up in communities and around homes in Knollwood-Donnybrook, Stoneleigh, Aigburth Manor and other local communities. The students also helped beautify the business



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district along York Road between Burke Avenue and the circle at York and Joppa roads in Towson.

In April 2014, a simulated plane crash set the stage for a multi-agency emergency exercise that brought Towson's College of Health Professions students together with Baltimore County first responders and hospital staff, as well as the Military Department of the Maryland Defense Force, to test emergency preparedness and responsiveness. The university has helped organized this drill, called Operation STAT, for several years.

The university's Reading Clinic reached out to Latino elementary students and their Spanish-speaking parents in Baltimore's Armistead Gardens neighborhood, pairing 25 candidates for master's degrees in education with students identified by their teachers as needing help with reading. The graduate students developed a specialized program for each child, and the clinic held workshops where the elementary students' parents learned how best to support their children's education.

Towson's Operation Guardian Tiger, a partnership between the Towson University Veterans Center and Towson Athletics, supported members of the National Guard and their families with a family fun day that gave the families an inside look at Towson Athletics, putting them on the court with the women's basketball team and in the locker room with the football team before heading out for some fun on the field at Johnny Unitas™ Stadium.

The Towson University Police Department continues to keep the campus community safe, reporting the lowest crime statistics on campus in FY14 and consistently reporting the lowest crime rate in the University System of Maryland. The new Public Safety Building on Towsontown Boulevard opened to house the department, as well campus locksmiths and access control systems, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, and the emergency preparedness unit.

Improvements to student and traffic safety took a significant step forward with plans and groundbreaking for the West Village Bridge, a pedestrian overpass linking the university's West Village Commons residence community to its academic district over



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Osler Drive. Built largely in FY14, the bridge and corresponding newly installed traffic light helped to increase traffic flow on the county road while preventing pedestrian accidents and injury.

Construction on Towson University in Northeastern Maryland began late in FY13 and bridged FY14 before the building opened to students last fall. The newly established presence of Towson University in Harford County held the unprecedented promise of a four-year degree for students in the region who preferred a local education to one that required the added expense of residence or long round-trip commutes. Plans throughout FY14 laid the groundwork for the six academic programs in place when the facility opened, on time and on budget. SECU Arena, which opened in late FY13, posted a highly successful first year in operation, dazzling fans, friends, community members and prospective students in an array of athletic events, commencements for both the university and community high schools, student welcoming events and more.

Towson University's men's basketball team was the standout feature of SECU Arena in its first year. The team built on its previous season's tremendous improvement to finish with 25 historic victories before ending its impressive tour with an appearance in the CollegeInsider.com Tournament (CIT).

Towson football stormed into the national spotlight with a run at the national Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) title. The stellar season finished January 4, 2014, vs. North Dakota State University at the championship game in Frisco, Texas. Following the season, running back Terrance West was drafted by the Cleveland Browns for an impressive first season in professional play.

The Towson women's lacrosse team took its third straight Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) tournament title, while the women's swimming & diving team became CAA champs again—the sixth title in seven years.

As you can clearly see, Towson University is a jewel of the state's institutions, offering exemplary comprehensive education and experience while meeting or exceeding expectations from the state. The university continues to manage its fiscal



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responsibilities with impressive distinction in challenging environs to offer affordable, accessible, quality education for Marylanders and others. My support for Towson University is likely obvious, but the strength of my commitment is built on the performance of its administrators, faculty, staff, and students, as I have shared here.

On behalf of the Board of Visitors, I thank you for your support of Towson University.

Most respectfully,

Myrna Cardin '65
Chair
Board of Visitors

c: Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, President of the Senate
Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House
Maggie McIntosh, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Edward J. Kasemeyer, Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera, Acting Secretary of Higher Education
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