President's Letter: Proposal to Study UMCP and UMB

March 24, 2011

Dear members of the University of Maryland community:

As you may know by now, Maryland Senate President Mike Miller recently proposed that the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents "study and ... develop a plan to merge the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) ... in a manner that does not eliminate but rather expands resources and opportunities at each of the campuses under a single University of Maryland."

The rationale for this proposal is that "The two institutions are complementary and have few if no duplicative programs. Combining the two institutions into one world class research and medical institution would encourage and facilitate seamless cross-disciplinary cooperation, research, and interaction ..."

The request was added to the budget bill by a subcommittee of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on March 21. If this budget language remains in the final budget bill approved by the Maryland General Assembly, this study and plan will be due on December 15, 2011. I support this request.

Pending legislative approval of such a study, I will work closely with President Perman to support the Board of Regents in its study of how the flagship campus and the founding campus can work together in ways that would create an educational and research powerhouse that would enhance the strengths of both campuses. Indeed, even before this request was proposed, President Perman and I had already scheduled an upcoming meeting at UMB so that we, accompanied by our respective deans and other campus leaders, can broaden and deepen our collaborations.

To win great opportunities in the fast-changing world of 21st century higher education, we must work even more closely to bridge the boundaries of academic and professional disciplines, USM institutions, and geography. We can then magnify the impact of our respective contributions to the education, the economic vitality, the health, and the quality of life of the people of Maryland and the nation. I ask that our UMCP community stand ready – together with our colleagues at UMB – to support the Board of Regents and the Chancellor should they move forward with this request. It is complex and it has potentially transformative impacts.

Sincerely,

Wallace D. Loh
President
University of Maryland, College Park