



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of MARYLAND*

Executive Director

University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM)
California, Maryland

THE SEARCH

The University System of Maryland (USM, “the System”—among the nation’s most robust, supportive, and forward-thinking public university systems—invites applications for the position of Executive Director of the USM at Southern Maryland (USMSM). USM seeks a visionary, collaborative, and community-minded Executive Director for the USMSM who will advance the center’s unique education, research, and community service missions. The Executive Director will oversee and direct all USMSM’s administrative operations in close collaboration with the USM chancellor’s office, partnering USM institutions, the local community college (the College of Southern Maryland), the tri-county public school systems, and other regional businesses, government agencies, and stakeholder groups.

The USMSM helps deliver on the System’s foundational mission—providing an exceptional education to any Marylander who wants one. This promise of opportunity for all animates every effort the USMSM undertakes and accelerates the outcomes by which the center measures its success: advancing social mobility, fueling the state’s economy, enriching the region, and improving the lives of those who call it home. Located in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, and 90 minutes from Washington, D.C., USMSM hosts upper-division undergraduate, advanced graduate, certificate, and professional training programs sponsored by six universities, all dedicated to supporting the postsecondary education access, workforce training, and professional development needs of the tri-county Southern Maryland region.

In line with the vision and priorities laid out in the USMSM’s recently approved five-year strategic plan, *Opportunity 2030*, the Executive Director will be responsible for guiding and developing the center’s array of workforce-related education and professional training opportunities, including its conferencing and economic development services, in addition to overseeing the facilities, administrative infrastructure, and support service USMSM has agreed to provide to organizations operating on the USMSM campus (i.e. the MATRIX Lab and the Kennedy Krieger Institute). The Executive Director will represent USMSM to local,

state, national, and international officials; advocate on the center's behalf within the University System and in Annapolis; and, in appropriate collaboration with partner institutions, oversee fundraising and advancement activities on behalf of the center and its activities. They will ensure coordination with key internal and external components of the center, including its internal governing and academic planning councils, and its external Board of Advisors.

The University System of Maryland has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT USMSM

USMSM was created in 2019 by the merger of the state-chartered Southern Maryland Higher Education Center (SMHEC), Maryland's oldest independent regional higher education center, with the University System of Maryland, thereby becoming USM's third, and newest regional higher education center. In doing so, the USMSM furthers the System's public mission of serving Maryland's population with high-quality education opportunities and contributing to the region's economic and cultural vitality. [Six USM](#) universities currently enroll students at USMSM in fields ranging from business to social work to education to engineering. The partner institutions consist of:

- Bowie State University
- Coppin State University
- Salisbury University
- Towson University
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Maryland Global Campus

All programs offered at USMSM are focused on the upper-division [undergraduate](#), [graduate](#), and certificate levels. The center also serves as host to an active portfolio of conferences, continuing education and professional development/training programs, and community service events. In addition to its cutting-edge education and professional development programs, in 2021 USMSM opened the new Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) building, which included the University of Maryland, College Park [Maryland Autonomous Technologies Research Innovation and eXploration \(MATRIX\) Lab](#), an advanced high-tech research and education facility created by the University of Maryland's A. James Clark School of Engineering to serve as hub for autonomous technologies and uncrewed systems research in southern Maryland, and the state of Maryland and nation as a whole. The construction of this state-of-the-art research center, something unique to USMSM, is a key investment by the System and the State into the future of Southern Maryland and a recognition of the potential of the three counties. It is critical to USMSM that Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's counties are served equitably, ensuring that all three benefit from the Center's initiatives.

Located in California, MD, just six miles from Naval Air Station Patuxent River (home of the Naval Air Warfare Center, or NAWCAD) and within the St. Mary's County AeroPark Innovation District, which includes the University of Maryland's Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Research and Operations Center (UROC),

USMSM's campus currently consists of three academic buildings totaling more than 140,000 square feet of classroom, instructional laboratory, research, conference, and office space. In addition to the 40,000-square-foot MATRIX lab, opened by UMD in 2021, the USMSM serves as the regional host site for a Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI) school focused on serving students ages 5 to 21 with autism spectrum disorder.

The Southern Maryland Region

Southern Maryland's tri-county region is among the fastest-growing in Maryland, with a total population estimated at over 397,000 in 2025 and a workforce population exceeding 198,000. It is socioeconomically diverse, with a deeply rooted agrarian tradition standing shoulder to shoulder with a modern-day innovation economy. Three military installations—including the Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center, and the Naval Air Station Patuxent River, the home of Naval Air Systems Command and the Navy's busiest flight test center—have helped attract and retain more than 200 defense-related contractor firms to the region. Its economic strength has been fueled largely by the Naval Air Station Patuxent River's expansion in the late 1990s after the Base Realignment and Closure Act proved a boon to the region's industrial prospects. In combination with the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant and Dominion Energy's Cove Point Liquefied Natural Gas facility, both located in Southern Maryland, these bases and companies have helped Southern Maryland attract one of the state's largest concentrations of technology workers—a traditional area of focus for USMSM's degree and workforce preparation programs. Southern Maryland's particular environment has created a unique array of constituencies for the USMSM, spanning military personnel, to government employees of three different counties, to expanding area small businesses and defense contractor firms, to community college students seeking 2+2 degree-completion opportunities, to Southern Maryland's high schoolers who take advantage of summer programs and research seminars at the center, among many others.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Serving at the behest of the [Chancellor of the USM](#), the Executive Director reports operationally to the senior leadership of the University System of Maryland (the Chancellor or their designee), with a programmatic liaise to the [Provost of the University of Maryland, College Park](#), which currently serves as the managing institution for USMSM. The USMSM's three buildings, activities, and staff are supported by an annual budget that is projected to approach \$3.9 million. The ED oversees [six direct reports](#) and works closely with an engaged and empowered [Board of Advisors](#) to help identify workforce-related needs and advance relationship building throughout the Southern Maryland region.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Implement and augment strategic initiatives from *Opportunity 2030* to bolster the impact, portfolio, and brand of the USMSM

The Executive Director will be the chief ambassador and champion for the USMSM to build a high-quality academic center that meets the needs of students, employers, and the community in the region. Utilizing the vision and priorities outlined in the *Opportunity 2030* strategic plan as a roadmap, the Executive Director must have the discernment to not only develop action plans to achieve these goals but also the gumption to mobilize the necessary stakeholders and ensure the appropriate resources to bring them to fruition. It will be crucial for the Executive Director to work within the governance structure to build stakeholder buy-in and support for USMSM's new 5-year strategic plan among System leadership, partner institutions, the Board of Advisors, and other stakeholder groups.

Key to the future success of the plan is the projection of a unified brand that frames the Center as a conduit for market-relevant education that allows regional students to complete a degree from a USM partner institution at a low cost and without having to leave their community. Leveraging social media and other communications conduits, as well as engaging with USMSM's partner institutions, will allow the Executive Director to bring a message of vision and impact beyond the campus. To that end, the Executive Director will develop and oversee marketing and communication efforts to raise the visibility of the USMSM, its partner institutions, and the programs offered, while assessing the quality and effectiveness of services provided by USMSM.

Steward the infrastructure and resources, human and fiscal, of the USMSM in a thoughtful, efficient, and effective manner to ensure the long-term sustainability and strength of the enterprise

The USMSM's three buildings, including the Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) building, total more than 140,000 square feet of classroom, instructional laboratory, research, conference, and office space. The Executive Director is responsible for the daily direction of the physical and human operations of the USMSM, including overseeing management of center facilities and fiscal responsibility for the management of operational budgets as directed by USM and the managing institution (the University of Maryland, College Park). The Executive Director will rely upon a dedicated staff and will seek ways to retain them and further their personal and professional growth, while simultaneously focusing on recruitment efforts for key staff vacancies.

An astute budgetary manager, the Executive Director will be expected to prepare and present substantive information and materials on USMSM's budget, programs, and activities, as appropriate, to the System leadership and the center's institutional partners, as well as the USMSM Board of Advisors. As the funding landscape for higher education continues to shift, the Executive Director will think critically and collaborate intentionally with USMSM's partner institutions to identify and implement appropriate fundraising strategies on behalf of the programs and students served at the center. Similarly, the Executive Director will seek out and promote the expansion and growth of professional development and training

opportunities offered at USMSM, including conferences, workshops, and student events, to increase revenue.

Liaise with the Board of Advisors, the USM, and Southern Maryland Leaders and Communities to Build and Sustain Critical Partnerships

The mission of the USMSM is supported by a Board of Advisors, comprised of 16 active and engaged representatives from USM institutions, K-16 education and business partners, and government agencies. Serving as the chief emissary for the USMSM, the Executive Director must actively engage with the Board in strategic conversations and leverage the Board's collective networks and experiences to advance the Center's and the Region's strategic goals. Partnership in all forms is critical to the Executive Director's responsibilities and leverage in furthering the USMSM's reach and impact, actively collaborating with the College of Southern Maryland to craft new pathways for non-traditional students, anticipating programmatic needs in partnership with school systems and other community stakeholders, and connecting with the broader Southern Maryland civic and business communities to define the Center's value proposition and broadcast its opportunities. Building from a recent study commissioned by the USMSM Board of Advisors, the Executive Director will continuously evaluate the academic program needs of the region's employers and students, providing updates to the System leadership and USMSM's institutional partners, the USMSM Board of Advisors, and carrying this message to broader constituencies. The Executive Director will think critically about when to leverage key stakeholders to create opportunities and inroads that benefit the future of the USMSM and the needs of its students, staff, and the tri-county community.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no single candidate will possess in full every useful experience listed, the search committee ideally seeks a person with the following qualifications:

- Earned doctorate or terminal degree required;
- Demonstrated leadership experience in a complex academic environment, with deft budgeting and management skills and an ability to synthesize different points of view into a unifying, strategic vision;
- A deep, demonstrated understanding of—and commitment to—the values and the mission of public higher education;
- Familiarity with regional higher education centers or branch campuses;
- Political acumen and a desire to engage with public and civic leadership at all levels; experience fostering successful town-gown relations and partnering with local and community leaders toward long-term goals and development;
- Demonstrated success working within a complex organizational structure that includes multiple constituencies and levels of oversight;
- A collaborative, transparent, and inclusive leadership style and the ability to reach and connect with a diverse array of audiences;

- An appreciation for the importance of transformative research, innovative pedagogy, and external economic engagement and impact, coupled with a commitment to the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders;
- A working familiarity with the interconnectedness of education, research, and economic development, and the criticality of successfully integrating all three;
- Demonstrated capability in inspiring and persuading diverse stakeholders, including advisory boards and/or committees, to buy into the articulated vision and become partners in driving the enterprise forward;
- Proven success and appetite for fundraising; the ability to represent USMSM to a wide range of constituents;
- A record of impact on creating a more diverse, equitable, and welcoming community; multicultural competence and a demonstrated awareness of, and sensitivity to, all people and the ability to foster and create a supportive climate for faculty, staff, and students;
- Unwavering dedication to the recruitment, retention, and professional development of a critically important team of staff;
- Experience in managing education facilities, including those supporting basic and applied research, as well as campus-wide master planning;
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills and effective use of a broad range of media.

COMPENSATION

The salary range for this position is \$245,000 - \$275,000. The full salary range reflects the growth potential for the hire. It is not typical for an individual to be offered a salary at the top of the range, though the University System of Maryland will do their best to offer a competitive salary to attract the most qualified candidates.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website [here](#).

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Gale Merseth, Partner

Stephen Kalogeras, Senior Associate

Elizabeth Arvanitis, Senior Search Coordinator

Isaacson, Miller

The University System of Maryland, the University of Maryland, College Park, and the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland are AA/EOE. Appropriate Auxiliary Aids and Services Available Upon Request. Please Notify in Advance (www.UMD.edu).

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM). The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM) would supersede any conflicting information in this document.