

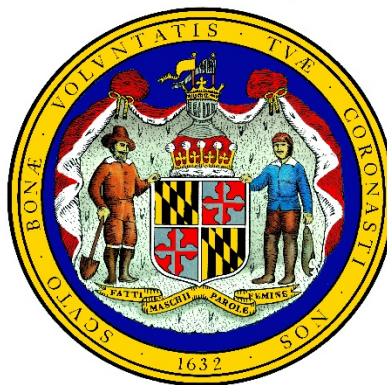
Audit Report

University System of Maryland Towson University

March 2024

Public Notice

In compliance with the requirements of the State Government Article Section 2-1224(i), of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Office of Legislative Audits has redacted cybersecurity findings and related auditee responses from this public report.



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MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Victoria L. Gruber
Executive Director

Gregory A. Hook, CPA
Legislative Auditor

March 19, 2024

Senator Clarence K. Lam, M.D., Senate Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, House Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Members of Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Annapolis, Maryland

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the University System of Maryland (USM) – Towson University (TU) for the period beginning June 25, 2019 and ending January 31, 2023. TU is a comprehensive public institution and provides a broad range of baccalaureate, graduate, and doctoral programs in the liberal arts and sciences.

Our audit disclosed a cybersecurity-related finding. However, in accordance with the State Government Article, Section 2-1224(i) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, we have redacted the finding from this audit report. Specifically, State law requires the Office of Legislative Audits to redact cybersecurity findings in a manner consistent with auditing best practices before the report is made available to the public. The term “cybersecurity” is defined in the State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 3.5-301(b), and using our professional judgment we have determined that the redacted finding falls under the referenced definition. The specifics of the cybersecurity finding were previously communicated to those parties responsible for acting on our recommendations.

Our audit also included a review to determine the status of the three findings contained in our preceding audit report. We determined that TU satisfactorily addressed those findings.

The USM Office’s response to this audit, on behalf of TU, is included as an appendix to this report; however, consistent with the requirements of State law, we have redacted all elements of the USM Office’s response since they are related to the cybersecurity audit finding. We reviewed the response and noted general agreement to our finding and related recommendations. Subsequent to the response receipt, but prior to the issuance of the final report, we contacted TU

management and obtained additional clarification that satisfactorily resolved an outstanding issue. Consequently, we have concluded that the written response and additional clarification together indicate that TU's corrective actions identified are sufficient to address all audit issues.

We wish to acknowledge the cooperation extended to us during the audit by TU. We also wish to acknowledge USM's and TU's willingness to address the audit issues and implement appropriate corrective actions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory A. Hook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'G' and 'H'.

Gregory A. Hook, CPA
Legislative Auditor

Background Information

Agency Responsibilities

Towson University (TU) is a comprehensive public institution of the University System of Maryland (USM) and operates under the jurisdiction of the USM Board of Regents. TU provides a broad range of undergraduate programs in both traditional arts and sciences and applied professional fields, as well as select professionally-oriented graduate and doctoral programs. According to TU's records, student enrollment for the fall 2022 semester totaled 19,793, including 16,861 undergraduate students and 2,932 graduate students.

TU's budget is funded by unrestricted revenues, such as tuition and fees and a State general fund appropriation, and restricted revenues, such as federal grants and contracts. According to the State's accounting records, TU's revenues for fiscal year 2022 totaled approximately \$528.6 million, including a State general fund appropriation of approximately \$135 million (See Figure 1 on the following page).

Figure 1
TU Positions, Expenditures, and Funding Sources

Full-Time Equivalent Positions as of June 30, 2022		
	Positions	Percent
Filled	2,120	83.2%
Vacant	428	16.8%
Total	2,548	
Fiscal Year 2022 Expenditures		
	Expenditures	Percent
Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$233,515,690	44.2%
Technical and Special Fees	45,524,828	8.6%
Operating Expenses	249,601,232	47.2%
Total	\$528,641,750	
Fiscal Year 2022 Funding Sources		
	Funding	Percent
<u>Unrestricted</u>		
General Fund	\$134,985,039	25.5%
Tuition and Fees	181,300,596	34.3%
Other University Revenues ¹	143,345,244	27.1%
	459,630,879	86.9%
<u>Restricted</u>		
Federal Grants and Contracts	60,900,056	11.6%
Other Gifts, Grants, and Contracts	8,110,815	1.5%
	69,010,871	13.1%
Total	\$528,641,750	

Source: State financial records and TU personnel records

Financial Management System

In July 2022, TU implemented a new cloud-based financial management system. The system is used to maintain TU's general ledger and perform other critical fiscal functions such as budgeting, purchasing, and disbursements.

¹ Includes revenues from Auxiliary Services (\$118.8M) and from the Higher Education Investment Fund (\$12.4M).

Status of Findings From Preceding Audit Report

Our audit included a review to determine the status of the three findings contained in our preceding audit report dated August 6, 2020. We determined that TU satisfactorily addressed these findings.

Findings and Recommendations

Information Systems Security and Control

We determined that Finding 1 related to “cybersecurity,” as defined by the State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 3.5-301(b) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and therefore is subject to redaction from the publicly available audit report in accordance with the State Government Article 2-1224(i). Consequently, the specifics of the following finding, including the analysis, related recommendation(s), along with the USM Office’s responses, have been redacted from this report copy.

Finding 1 Redacted cybersecurity-related finding.
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Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the University System of Maryland (USM) – Towson University (TU) for the period beginning June 25, 2019 and ending January 31, 2023. The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

As prescribed by the State Government Article, Section 2-1221 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the objectives of this audit were to examine TU’s financial transactions, records, and internal control, and to evaluate its compliance with applicable State laws, rules, and regulations.

In planning and conducting our audit, we focused on the major financial-related areas of operations based on assessments of significance and risk. The areas

addressed by the audit included procurements and disbursements, student accounts receivable, cash receipts, student financial aid, payroll, corporate purchasing cards, and information systems security and control. We also determined the status of the findings contained in our preceding audit report.

Our audit did not include certain support services provided to TU by the USM Office, such as bond financing, and by the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), such as processing certain construction vendor payments and capital project management. These support services are included within the scope of our audits of the USM Office and UMB, respectively. In addition, our audit did not include an evaluation of internal controls over compliance with federal laws and regulations for federal financial assistance programs and an assessment of TU's compliance with those laws and regulations because the State of Maryland engages an independent accounting firm to annually audit such programs administered by State agencies, including the components of the USM.

Our assessment of internal controls was based on agency procedures and controls in place at the time of our fieldwork. Our tests of transactions and other auditing procedures were generally focused on the transactions occurring during our audit period of June 25, 2019 to January 31, 2023, but may include transactions before or after this period as we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives.

To accomplish our audit objectives, our audit procedures included inquiries of appropriate personnel, inspections of documents and records, tests of transactions, and to the extent practicable, observations of TU's operations. Generally, transactions were selected for testing based on auditor judgment, which primarily considers risk, the timing or dollar amount of the transaction, or the significance of the transaction to the area of operation reviewed. As a matter of course, we do not normally use sampling in our tests, so unless otherwise specifically indicated, neither statistical nor non-statistical audit sampling was used to select the transactions tested. Therefore, unless sampling is specifically indicated in a finding, the results from any tests conducted or disclosed by us cannot be used to project those results to the entire population from which the test items were selected.

We also performed various data extracts of pertinent information from the State's Financial Management Information System (such as revenue and expenditure data) and the State's Central Payroll Bureau (payroll data), as well as from the contractor administering the State's Corporate Purchasing Card Program (credit card activity). The extracts are performed as part of ongoing internal processes established by the Office of Legislative Audits and were subject to various tests to determine data reliability. We determined that the data extracted from these

sources were sufficiently reliable for the purposes the data were used during this audit.

We also extracted data from TU's financial systems for the purpose of testing certain areas such as student financial aid and student accounts receivable. We performed various tests of the relevant data and determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes the data were used during the audit. Finally, we performed other auditing procedures that we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives. The reliability of data used in this report for background or informational purposes was not assessed.

TU's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control. Internal control is a process designed to provide reasonable assurance that objectives pertaining to the reliability of financial records; effectiveness and efficiency of operations, including safeguarding of assets; and compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations are achieved. As provided in *Government Auditing Standards*, there are five components of internal control: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. Each of the five components, when significant to the audit objectives, and as applicable to TU, were considered by us during the course of this audit.

Because of inherent limitations in internal control, errors or fraud may nevertheless occur and not be detected. Also, projections of any evaluation of internal control to future periods are subject to the risk that conditions may change or compliance with policies and procedures may deteriorate.

Our reports are designed to assist the Maryland General Assembly in exercising its legislative oversight function and to provide constructive recommendations for improving State operations. As a result, our reports generally do not address activities we reviewed that are functioning properly.

This report includes a finding relating to conditions that we consider to be significant deficiencies in the design or operation of internal control that could adversely affect TU's ability to maintain reliable financial records, operate effectively and efficiently, and/or comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. This finding is also considered a significant instance of noncompliance with applicable laws, rules, or regulations. Other less significant findings were communicated to TU that did not warrant inclusion in this report.

State Government Article Section 2-1224(i) requires that we redact in a manner consistent with auditing best practices any cybersecurity findings before a report

is made available to the public. This results in the issuance of two different versions of an audit report that contains cybersecurity findings – a redacted version for the public and an unredacted version for government officials responsible for acting on our audit recommendations.

The State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 3.5-301(b), states that cybersecurity is defined as “processes or capabilities wherein systems, communications, and information are protected and defended against damage, unauthorized use or modification, and exploitation.” Based on that definition, and in our professional judgment, we concluded that the finding in this report falls under that definition. Consequently, for the publicly available audit report all specifics as to the nature of the cybersecurity finding and required corrective actions have been redacted. We have determined that such aforementioned practices, and government auditing standards, support the redaction of this information from the public audit report. The specifics of this cybersecurity finding have been communicated to TU and those parties responsible for acting on our recommendations in an unredacted audit report.

The response from the USM Office, on behalf of TU, to our finding and recommendations is included as an appendix to this report. Depending on the version of the audit report, responses to any cybersecurity findings may be redacted in accordance with State law. As prescribed in the State Government Article, Section 2-1224 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, we will advise the USM Office regarding the results of our review of its response.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

February 29, 2024

Mr. Gregory A. Hook, CPA
Legislative Auditor
Office of Legislative Audits
The Warehouse at Camden Yards
351 West Camden Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21201

Re: University System of Maryland – Towson University
Period of Audit: June 25, 2019 through January 31, 2023

Dear Mr. Hook,

Thank you for the work of your team and the recommendations you provided. I have enclosed the University System of Maryland's responses to your draft report covering the examination of the accounts and records of the University System of Maryland – Towson University. Our comments refer to the individual items in the report.

Sincerely,



Ellen Herbst
Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Mark R. Ginsberg, President, TU
Ms. Linda R. Gooden, Chair, University System of Maryland Board of Regents
Mr. Louis M. Pope, University System of Maryland Board of Regents
Dr. Jay A. Perman, Chancellor, University System of Maryland
Ms. Celeste Denson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs, USM Office
Mr. David Mosca, Vice Chancellor for Accountability, USM Office
Mr. Michael C. Eismeier, Associate Vice Chancellor and CIO, USM Office
Ms. Samantha Norris, Director, Financial Planning and Analysis, USM Office
Mr. Benjamin Lowenthal, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Administration and Finance, TU
Mr. Vasu Bhatt, Director, Management Advisory and Compliance Services, TU

**University System of Maryland
Towson University**

Agency Response Form

Information Systems Security and Control

The Office of Legislative Audits (OLA) has determined that Finding 1 related to “cybersecurity,” as defined by the State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 3.5-301(b) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and therefore is subject to redaction from the publicly available audit report in accordance with the State Government Article 2-1224(i). Although the specifics of the finding, including the analysis, related recommendation(s), along with the USM Office’s responses, have been redacted from this report copy, the USM Office’s responses indicated agreement with the finding and related recommendations.

<p>Finding 1 Redacted cybersecurity-related finding.</p>
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Agency Response has been redacted by OLA.

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