

# NEWS



## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MPOWERING THE STATE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Announces Prestigious MPower Professorships**  
*Six professors from University of Maryland, Baltimore & University of Maryland, College Park awarded \$150,000 each over three years to support their collaborative work*

BALTIMORE – The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: [MPowering the State \(MPower\)](#) announces the appointment of six professors, three from the [University of Maryland, Baltimore \(UMB\)](#) and three from the [University of Maryland, College Park \(UMCP\)](#), as MPower Professors. The MPower Professorship recognizes, incentivizes, and fosters collaborations between faculty who are working together on the most pressing issues of our time.

To be considered for the MPower Professorship, faculty must demonstrate collaboration on strategic research that would be unattainable or difficult to achieve by UMB or UMCP acting independently of one another and must embrace the mission of MPower — to collaboratively strengthen and serve the state of Maryland and its citizens.

MPower Professors will each receive \$150,000, allocated over three years, to apply to their salary or to support supplemental research activities. These funds recognize, enable, and support strong collaborations between faculty in the joint research enterprise between UMCP and UMB.

“Each of the six MPower Professors selected this year exemplifies a dedication to collaboration, innovation, and discovery” said UMB President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS. “They positively impact the lives of citizens in Maryland, across the country and around the world through their work to solve major challenges facing society.”

"Reaching across disciplines to tackle complex problems takes tireless commitment, dedication, and innovation. I'm so thankful to these six professors for demonstrating that we are stronger when we work together, and that addressing the grand challenges of our time requires thinking outside the box," said UMCP President Darryll J. Pines, PhD, MS.

The 2023 MPower Professors are developing advanced understanding of ways to improve programs and policies to support early parenting and child development; discovering emergent dynamic properties of complex systems at the interface of physics and biology; investigating interventions to improve substance use and other health outcomes locally and globally; maximizing the bioavailability of oral medications; researching ways to reduce aging-associated ailments such as cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes; and connecting engineering and clinical care to develop cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic methods for blinding and neurodegenerative diseases.

The 2023 MPower Professors are:



[Lisa Berlin, PhD, MS](#), is the Alison L. Richman Professor for Children, Youth, and Families at the University of Maryland School of Social Work at UMB whose research focuses on early child-caregiver attachment as well as programs and policies to support early parenting and child development. Dr. Berlin directs *Compañeros en la Salud de los Niños/Partners in Children's Health*, a five-year randomized trial testing a parent coaching program with low-income Latino families in East Baltimore. Dr. Berlin also is editor of the Society for Research in Child Development *Social Policy*

*Report*, a journal dedicated to leveraging child and family research to support evidence-based policy development. Dr. Berlin earned her PhD and MS in Human Development and Family Studies from the Pennsylvania State University, and her BA in Psychology from Barnard College.



[Wolfgang Losert, PhD](#), is a professor in the Department of Physics in UMCP's College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences. He is a member of the school's Institute for Physical Science and Technology, holds an affiliate appointment in the Fischell Department of Bioengineering, and has an adjunct appointment with the [University of Maryland Medical System's Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center](#). He also is co-director of the [National Cancer Institute-University of Maryland Partnership for Integrative Cancer Research](#). Dr. Losert's research — supported by \$2 million-plus a year in funding for the past seven years — is at the convergence of physics, biology, and artificial intelligence and focuses on the nonlinear dynamics of living systems. Dr. Losert earned his PhD from City College of New York

before joining UMCP shortly after as an Assistant Professor.



[Jessica Magidson, PhD](#), is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at UMCP and director of the [Center for Substance Use, Addiction & Health Research](#) in the school's College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. She also is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM). Dr. Magidson is an internationally recognized expert on adapting peer-delivered behavioral interventions for substance

use and health outcomes globally. Her prolific research and commitment to addressing two of the state's and nation's most pressing health issues — substance use and mental health — have made her a rising star in her field. Dr. Magidson received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from UMCP. She completed pre-and postdoctoral training at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, where she was an Assistant Professor before returning to UMCP. Her CESAR Directorship and UMB partnership will allow for platform expansion to address the opioid crisis.



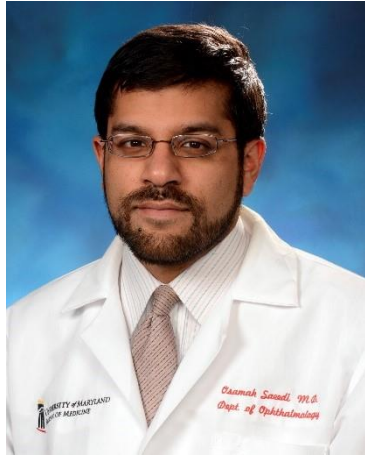
[James Polli, PhD](#), is a professor and the Ralph F. Shangraw/Noxell Endowed chair in Industrial Pharmacy and Pharmaceutics at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy at UMB. He is co-director of the University of Maryland [Center of Excellence in Regulatory Science and Innovation](#) and the [Center for Research on Complex Generics](#), both funded by the Food and Drug Administration. Dr. Polli's research is focused on oral drug absorption, specifically maximizing oral bioavailability through formulation and chemical approaches and developing public quality standards for oral dosage forms. He is a fellow of the

American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists and has been an editor of its *Pharmaceutical Research* journal for 12 years. Dr. Polli earned his PhD in Pharmaceutics from the University of Michigan. Earlier, he received his bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science.



[Steven Prior, PhD, MA](#), is an associate professor and associate chair for research in the Department of Kinesiology at UMCP's School of Public Health. He holds a joint appointment in the UMSOM Department of Medicine and at the [Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center](#) at [Baltimore Veteran Affairs Medical Center](#). His research is focused on conducting translational exercise intervention studies to determine mechanisms by which the risk for aging-associated vascular and functional impairments may be reduced in older adults. He has extensive experience in implementing exercise training interventions in older adults with cardiometabolic disorders, as

well as studying molecular, cellular, tissue, and whole-body contributors to these disorders. Dr. Prior received his PhD in Kinesiology from UMCP, his Master of Arts in Sport and Exercise Science from the Ohio State University, and his bachelor's degree in Sports Medicine from the University of Pittsburgh. He also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Gerontology and Metabolism at UMSOM.



[Osamah Saeedi, MD, MS](#), is a professor and vice chair in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences in the School of Medicine at UMB who also serves as chief of the department's glaucoma service and director of clinical research. At UMCP, he is an adjunct associate professor in the A. James Clark School of Engineering's Fischell Department of Bioengineering. Dr. Saeedi is a National Institutes of Health-funded investigator whose research focuses on the development of novel methods of single-cell imaging in the eye. His innovative translational work connects the worlds of engineering and clinical care and aims to address the need for new diagnostic and therapeutic modalities for blinding and neurodegenerative diseases. Dr. Saeedi earned his

Doctor of Medicine and completed his ophthalmology residency at the University of Texas – Southwestern Medical Center. He completed his glaucoma fellowship at the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University and received a Master of Science in Epidemiology and Clinical Research at UMB.

### **About the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: *MPowering the State***

[The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: \*MPowering the State\*](#) is a collaboration between the state of Maryland's two most powerful public research institutions: the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). It leverages the sizable strengths and complementary missions of both institutions to strengthen Maryland's innovation economy, advance interdisciplinary research, create opportunities for students, and solve important problems for the people of Maryland and the nation. Working together, UMB and UMCP achieve innovation and impact through collaboration.

The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act of 2016 strengthened and formalized the structured relationship between UMB and UMCP, which began in 2012. The law deepens the alliance and enables UMB and UMCP to pursue even greater transformative change and impact, far surpassing what each institution could do independent of the other.

### **About the University of Maryland, Baltimore**

The [University of Maryland, Baltimore \(UMB\)](#) was founded in 1807 as the Maryland College of Medicine, which now stands as the nation's oldest public medical school. In response to growing social and cultural needs, UMB's mission has evolved and grown tremendously. Widely recognized as a preeminent institution, UMB serves as the academic health, law, and social

work university of the University System of Maryland and is guided by a mission of excellence in education, research, clinical care, and public service.

UMB is a thriving academic health center combining cutting-edge biomedical research, exceptional patient care, and nationally ranked academic programs. With extramural funding totaling \$654 million in Fiscal Year 2022, each tenured/tenure-track faculty member generates an average of \$1.5 million in research grants each year. More than 3,100 faculty members conduct leading-edge research and develop solutions and technologies that impact human health locally and around the world. World-class facilities and cores, as well as interprofessional centers and institutes, allow faculty to investigate pressing questions in a highly collaborative fashion. As a result, the more than 7,000 students, postdocs, and trainees directly benefit from working and learning alongside leading experts as they push the boundaries of their fields.

### **About the University of Maryland, College Park**

The University of Maryland (UMD) is the state's flagship university and a leading public research institution, propelled by a \$1.3 billion joint research enterprise. Located four miles from Washington, D.C., the university is dedicated to addressing the grand challenges of our time and is the nation's first Do Good campus. It is driven by a diverse and proudly inclusive community of more than 50,000 fearless Terrapins. UMD is a top producer of Fulbright scholars and offers an unparalleled student experience with more than 300 academic programs, 25 living-learning programs and 400 study abroad programs. Spurred by a culture of innovation and creativity, UMD faculty are global leaders in their field and include Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners and members of the national academies. For more information about the University of Maryland, visit [umd.edu](http://umd.edu).

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