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**Maryland Higher Education Commission
FY 2023 Operating Budget
Higher Education Overview
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis**

**House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development
Delegate Ben Barnes
January 27, 2022**

**Senate Budget and Taxation
Subcommittee on Education, Business, and Administration
Senator Nancy King
January 31, 2022**

Issues

Page 20 - MHEC, USM, MSU, SMCM, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) should comment on what steps are being taken to assist the transfer student population, specifically identifying actions that have been taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to more easily facilitate the student transfer process for these students.

As the analysis notes, MHEC has convened a workgroup of relevant stakeholders to implement the Transfer with Success Act through regulatory changes and a detailed guidance document. **First** and foremost, the proposed regulations establishes a new process for the denial of credits or courses between public institutions of higher education in Maryland (as required by the Transfer with Success Act). **Second**, the proposed regulations reflect a reorganization of the existing regulations. As the workgroup members considered the new requirements regarding the denial of credit, additional questions regarding the transfer of courses and credits arose. While the current set of regulations answered many of those questions, it became clear that a reorganization of the regulations was needed.

Third, the proposed regulations reflect additional substantive changes to provide standardization regarding transfer. As part of the workgroup discussions, it became clear that there needed to be a statewide standard for establishing course equivalencies. The proposed regulations reflect this by establishing a 70% standard: when 70% of learning outcomes are equivalent between two courses, a course cannot be denied for transfer. Additionally, as this work continued, it became

clear that current regulations erroneously interchanged the terms “credit” and “course.” The transfer of specific coursework is what matters to students working towards meeting graduation and degree requirements (not simply the transfer of *credit*). The focus should be on transferring courses and then subsequently awarding credits for transferred courses, just like credit is awarded for prior learning. Therefore, the proposed regulations reflect a vetting of the use of “credit” and “course” to ensure the proper use of each term. Collectively, the proposed regulations will clarify statewide standards regarding the transfer of credit and courses and implement new standards.

In conjunction with these regulatory changes, we have also drafted guidance that mirrors the proposed regulations, including guidance regarding the annual data collection for the denial of credit. The new data collection will likely be a significant lift for the campuses (both in terms of human resources and infrastructure for data collections). There will need to be ongoing coordination from Commission staff to ensure a consistent statewide collection and general compliance with the transfer regulations.



**University System of Maryland
FY 2023 Operating Budget
Higher Education Overview
Response to the Department of Legislative Services' Analysis**

**House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development
Delegate Ben Barnes
Thursday, January 27, 2022**

**Senate Budget & Taxation
Subcommittee on Education, Business and Administration
Senator Nancy King
Monday, January 31, 2022**

Before I address the analysts' questions, I want to quickly acknowledge the enrollment landscape my colleagues and I face. As you know, the USM's 3.2 percent enrollment dip this year mirrors declines across the nation. While we have much that reassures us—an increase in first-time, full-time students; growth in applications—we recognize the challenges induced or exacerbated by COVID. We are working with our institutions where enrollment declines are most acute—our HBCUs and our smaller universities—and collaborating with them closely to improve recruitment and retention. We are directing new and significant funding to this work.

I also want to comment on students' mental health, certainly another challenge all of us are confronting. There is a spiking need for mental health services on our campuses. Our primary challenge is not only a dearth of counselors overall given growing demand, but difficulty in attracting and retaining them on campus, as state lines cannot compete with the income these professionals are able to generate in private practice. We are working to innovate delivery of care—through, for example, third-party providers, telehealth appointments, lay and peer therapists—so that we may expand our reach and meet this critical need.

Issues & Comments Requested:

- 1. Page 20—MHEC, USM, MSU, SMCM, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) should comment on what steps are being taken to assist the transfer student population, specifically*

identifying actions that have been taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to more easily facilitate the student transfer process for these students.

USM Response:

ARTSYS, the statewide platform and course equivalency database maintained by the USM, is undergoing an update and expansion for 35 participating USM and non-USM institutions, including Maryland's 16 community colleges. The new ARTSYS platform will be implemented at all institutions between January and April 2022, scheduled according to each institution's student information system. The functional training period for the new ARTSYS is the first week of March through the second week of May 2022. However, for institutions that transitioned to the platform early in the implementation window, functional training may occur earlier. There are continued requests from institutions to obtain ongoing funding to support the new ARTSYS.

2021 Session Bill – Transfer with Success Act 2021:

In consultation with MHEC attorneys, MHEC and the five higher education segments completed the revisions to COMAR regulations and guidelines needed to meet the Transfer with Success Act's requirements for reporting the denial of transfer credits. COMAR regulations and guidelines are scheduled on the MHEC Commissioners January 26, 2022, meeting agenda.

2. *Page 28—The USM Chancellor, presidents of SMCM and MSU, MICUA, and the Executive Director of MACC should comment on steps that have been taken to address education delivery and access for their students and spring 2022 instruction plans.*

USM Response:

Campuses generally are conducting in-person instruction for Spring 2022 and are employing high-flex course delivery for students who must quarantine.

3. *Page 32—The Chancellor of USM and the Presidents of MSU, SMCM, and MICUA should comment on future plans concerning the usage of standardized test in the admissions process and how institutions determine the preparedness of entering freshmen.*

USM Response:

The current USM Admissions policy (III 4.00) requires a standardized test score unless the Board of Regents has granted an exception. UMGC is an open-enrollment institution, and therefore does not have that requirement. Salisbury University was granted an exception several years ago. And just prior to the pandemic, UMES presented well-documented data to support their going "test-optional."

When the pandemic interfered with the giving of standardized tests, the board granted the chancellor authority to permit exceptions to the current policy, and all USM institutions went to a test-optional admissions process. Each institution has its own internal admissions process, but all consider general level of preparation, high school transcript (including courses and grades), and several other individual factors in their admissions decisions.

Our institutions use placement testing heavily for entering students to ensure placement in courses in which the individual has a high likelihood of success. Within the Academic Affairs Advisory Council (USM provosts) and the Admissions Officers affinity group, we do regularly discuss similarities and differences among the institutions, so that good practices may be shared.

Given the national movement toward a test-optional approach, and the more comprehensive admissions processes developed and improved during the pandemic, a USM workgroup is now meeting to propose a change in the USM admissions policy to permit more campus flexibility. This policy change will be proposed to the regents in late spring.

In the meantime, with the ongoing COVID pandemic, our institutions have been temporarily granted the flexibility to remain test-optional. It is also important to note that admissions officers are working closely with financial aid officers, as many scholarship applications currently require an ACT or SAT score to qualify for the scholarship. New definitions in scholarship requirements are being explored.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions:

Instructional Faculty Workload Report: The committees request that the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University (MSU), and St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) continue to provide annual instructional workload reports for tenured/tenure-track faculty and all types of faculty. Additional information may be included at the institution's discretion. Furthermore, the USM report should include the percent of faculty meeting or exceeding teaching standards for tenured/tenure-track faculty for the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus.

USM Response:

The USM will continue to provide annual faculty workload reports. Because there are no standards for teaching specific numbers of classes in professional schools, the USM is unable to report information for the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus. We will work with the state to provide relevant available information.



Morgan State University
Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

*House Appropriations Committee
Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Delegate Ben Barnes
Thursday, January 27, 2022; 1:00 PM

*Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee
Senator Craig J. Zucker
Monday, January 31, 2022; 1:00 PM

DLS Higher Education Fiscal 2023 Budget Overview

Suggested Comments

Page 20 - MHEC, USM, MSU, SMCM, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) should comment on what steps are being taken to assist the transfer student population, specifically identifying actions that have been taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to more easily facilitate the student transfer process for these students.

MSU Response: Morgan State University has undertaken a number of steps to assist the transfer student population, including developing a robust, fully online transfer student orientation (Bear Notes) and new software implementations (Transfer Equivalency System and EAB Transfer Portal) that make it easier for prospective transfer students to determine for themselves what courses will transfer even before they apply to the University. We have also enhanced our backend administrative processes to better facilitate transcript review, transfer student advising, and student onboarding. Rather than having students have to reach out to the individual Transfer Coordinator for their academic School for some matters, the Registrar's Office for other matters, and the Transfer Student Programming Office (TSP) for still others, Transfer students now have a dedicated email account, Transfer Student Programming, (tsp@morgan.edu) where they can address any and all questions, and TSP will either respond or route the email to the appropriate department for prompt assistance. The University is also working to increase the number of articulation agreements with community college partners, to more easily facilitate student transfer.

Specific actions taken as a result of the pandemic included waiving application fees and accepting unofficial transcripts for initial admission decisions. The Office of Undergraduate

Admission also held virtual live admission information sessions specifically for prospective transfer students and Decision Days, in which prospective transfer students could submit their unofficial transcripts by Sunday and then schedule a virtual appointment for that week to receive an immediate admission decision, preliminary credit evaluation, and ask any questions.

Page 28 - The USM Chancellor, presidents of SMCM and MSU, MICUA, and the Executive Director of MACC should comment on steps that have been taken to address education delivery and access for their students and spring 2022 instruction plans.

MSU Response: At the onset of the Pandemic, Morgan State University went fully remote in the second half of March 2020. In the fall 2020, very limited in-person courses were offered. Since that time, online courses as a percent of whole have tripled over the last 5 terms (from 5 to 16%).

In fall 2020, Morgan introduced flexible option classes, where students have options to choose between “remote” or “face-to-face” within the same class. Morgan later designated these classes as “Morgan-Flex” classes labeled with an “M.” For Morgan-Flex classes, remote students can attend classes with the in-person students via technology at the same time. During fall 2020 to spring 2022, the university converted 240 traditional classrooms to “Morgan-Flex classrooms” by installing the necessary technology including audio, video, and internet access systems. Thus, Morgan has the capability to offer all classes with the flexible option for students, except for laboratory, studio, internship, field education classes, where in-person learning is required or the best modality.

After officially introducing Morgan-Flex last fall, the proportion of online + Morgan-Flex, has increased to the current 41% of all the courses. In this case, all students have the in-person option, which we think is the better learning modality for students, especially for freshman and sophomore students. At the same time, we offer the remote option for all students needing remote access or who are living remotely, to take the combination of Morgan-Flex and online classes.

For the spring 2022 term, Morgan State offers 25% Morgan-Flex, 16% online, and 59% traditional face-to-face courses.

Page 32 - The Chancellor of USM and the Presidents of MSU, SMCM, and MICUA should comment on future plans concerning the usage of standardized test in the admissions process and how institutions determine the preparedness of entering freshmen.

MSU Response: Morgan State University had been reviewing institutional and national data and having university conversations on the usage of standardized tests in the admissions process for several years. The pandemic pushed us, as it did so many other institutions, to implement a test-optional policy on a temporary basis. The University is currently reviewing the data on student performance to determine the impact of going test-optional. The appropriate university units, including the Center for Predictive Analytics, Institutional Research, and Enrollment Management and Student Success will use this data to guide future plans regarding standardized test usage and the most effective ways to determine the preparedness of entering freshmen.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

Page 33 - The committees request that the University System of Maryland (USM), *Morgan State University (MSU)*, and St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) continue to provide annual instructional workload reports for tenured/tenure-track faculty.

MSU Response: The University agrees to provide the requested report.

ST MARY'S

COLLEGE *of* MARYLAND

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Higher Education Overview

**House Appropriations Committee
Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
January 27, 2022**

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**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business, and Administration Subcommittee
Senator Nancy J. King, Chair
January 31, 2022**



**Dr. Tuajuanda C. Jordan, President
Mr. Charles C. Jackson, Government Relations Liaison**

Introduction – The Public Honors College

As the State's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) provides a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible. The College awards a variety of undergraduate degrees, as well as a Master of Arts in Teaching graduate degree. With a faculty of gifted teachers and distinguished scholars, a talented and diverse student body, and a low student/faculty ratio, St. Mary's College provides a challenging curriculum within an academically nurturing environment. In addition, the College fosters a sense of social responsibility and community among its students through its curriculum and campus life.

*The Nation's 1st Public
Honors College*

Supporting the two goals articulated by the State's historical vision for the College - the educational requirements of an honors program and the promise of access - sets St. Mary's College uniquely in the State and in rare company in the national higher education sector. St. Mary's College has been highly successful in supporting State-wide goals with one of the highest retention and completion rates among Maryland publics, a commitment to diversity, and in providing financial resources for students with need.

As a public college that is both accessible and affordable, St. Mary's College provides the opportunity for academically talented students from a broad socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial spectrum to acquire a liberal arts education. This diversity creates a rich academic and social environment that enhances the education provided by the College.

The College continues to evolve as an innovator within the national higher education sector. Our new core curriculum, Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery (LEAD), will provide every student with theme-based integrated learning experiences, practical skills, internships, capstone projects, and other experiences that integrate career preparation with an honors curriculum within the context of the foundation of a liberal education. Our national standing and successes make us the leader among public liberal arts institutions. St. Mary's College has become **The National Public Honors College**.

As always, the College is grateful to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission for their ongoing commitment to higher education, in general, and to St. Mary's College of Maryland specifically.

Enrollment

Enrollment at St. Mary's College has increased for both Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, despite the pandemic. As shown Exhibit 1, overall **undergraduate enrollment has increased 5% over the past two years** (Fall 2019 to Fall 2021).

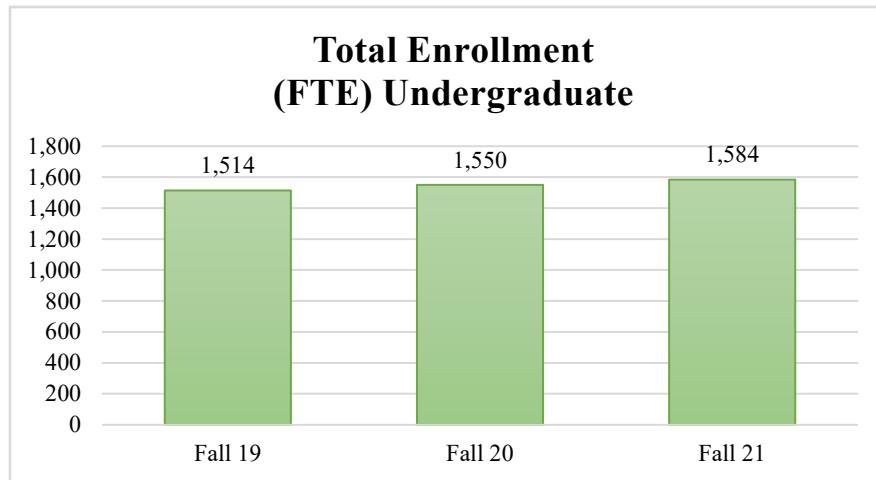


Exhibit 1

Increased enrollment is primarily the result of recruiting a strong incoming class of new first-year students and new transfer students. As shown below in Exhibit 2, the number of new first-year and transfer students has **increased 15% over the past two years.**

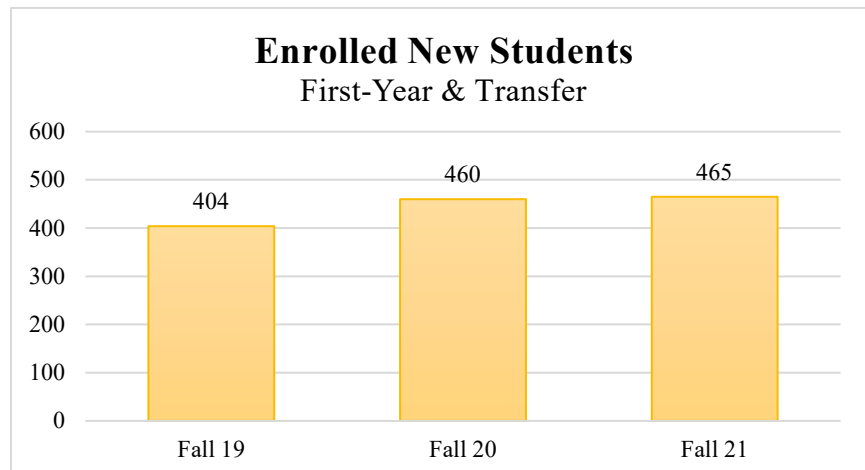


Exhibit 2

The increase in new students is the result of our varied efforts to enhance our position within the higher education market. These include:

- implementation of our new *LEAD* curriculum (Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery) that integrates the proven long-term benefits of a traditional liberal arts education with the applied professional skills demanded in today's economy,
- our enhanced marketing and recruitment efforts implemented to launch our new brand, *The National Public Honors College*, and
- new academic programs in neuroscience and marine science.

Together, these initiatives have made St. Mary's College both more relevant and competitive. Illustrating this success, over the past two years **applications have increased 70%** (Exhibit 3).

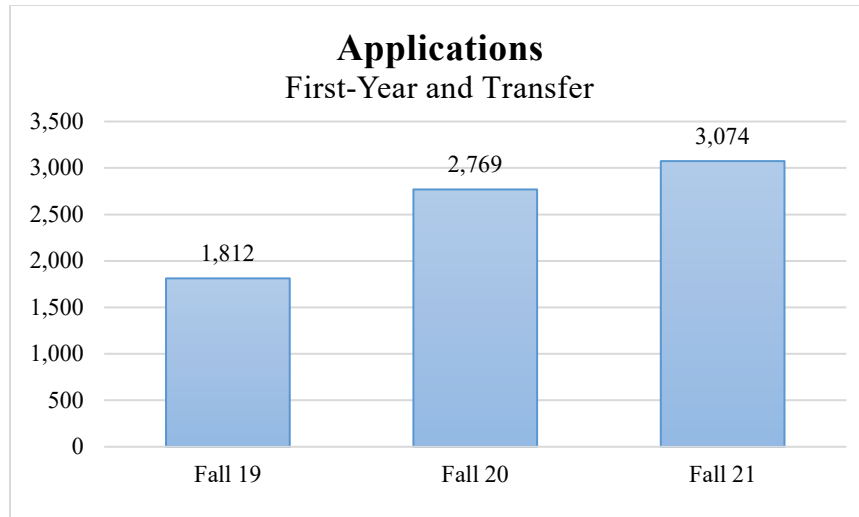


Exhibit 3

Affordability

St. Mary's College's unique mission, to provide an honors-level liberal arts education that is both accessible and affordable to all Marylanders, is challenging. Through a combination of institutional efforts to control expenses and State support, tuition pricing was lowered in FY15 and has since been successfully moderated, making St. Mary's College more affordable for Maryland families. In-state tuition for the 2021-2022 academic year (\$12,116) was frozen for a second consecutive year (without State Tuition relief funding). **Tuition in 2021 remains less than it was eight years ago for the 2013-2014 academic year** (Exhibit 4).

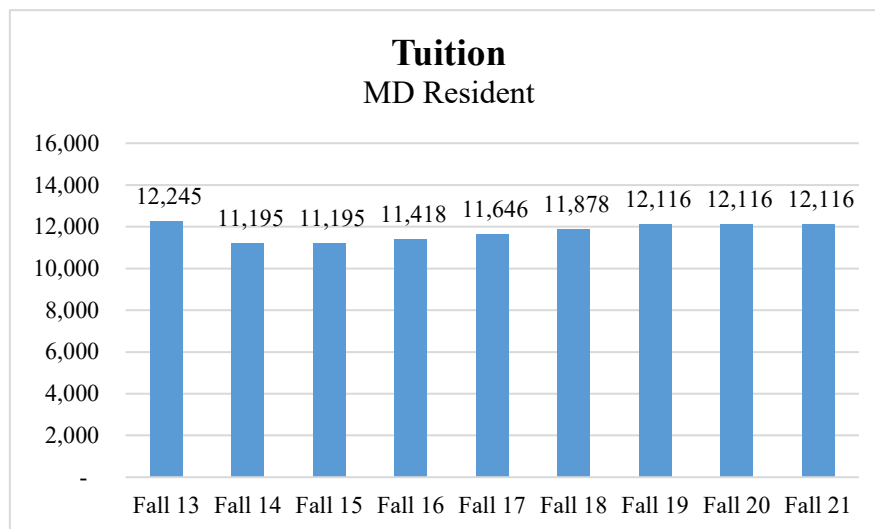


Exhibit 4

Response to Questions in the Higher Education Overview

Page 20: MHEC, USM, MSU, SMCM, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) should comment on what steps are being taken to assist the transfer student population, specifically identifying actions that have been taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to more easily facilitate the student transfer process for these students.

The College's Assistant Director for Transfer Admission is dedicated to working with prospective transfer students. The Assistant Director meets with prospective transfer students, reviews applications, ensures that transfer articulation agreements are current, and works closely with community colleges. The Assistant Director also works to expedite the transfer credit evaluations and closely supports admitted transfer students through the enrollment process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College added virtual options for recruitment and admission counseling to serve prospective transfer students.

The College also initiated a standing transfer work group in the Fall of 2020 to strengthen the transfer process. This group, which includes staff from the offices of Admission, Registrar, and Student Success Services, works to ensure that the transfer enrollment process is comprehensive, complete, and timely - from the offer of admission through the first day of courses.

The College did not see a reduction in new transfer students the last two years due to the pandemic. Also, as a result of the College's efforts, the 4-year graduation rate for transfer students has increased from 62% in 2017 to 74% in 2021.

Page 28: The USM Chancellor, presidents of SMCM and MSU, MICUA, and the Executive Director of MACC should comment on steps that have been taken to address education delivery and access for their students and spring 2022 instruction plans.

For the Fall 2021 semester, the College returned to a full in-person campus environment with courses held in classrooms similar to pre-COVID conditions. Returning to an in-person campus environment is essential to providing a student-centered, high touch, instructional and residential program where students, staff, and faculty thrive through personal interactions.

The Spring 2022 semester began on January 17th similar to the Fall 2021 semester – fully in-person.

Page 32: The Chancellor of USM and the Presidents of MSU, SMCM, and MICUA should comment on future plans concerning the usage of standardized test in the admissions process and how institutions determine the preparedness of entering freshmen.

The College made the decision in 2019 to become test-optional in the admission process following research on the validity of standardized testing to predict a St. Mary's College student's success. The research concluded that a prospective student's standardized test score was less accurate in predicting academic success than the student's high school GPA. For underrepresented students, the correlation between test scores and academic success was even less. As a result, the College made the decision to become test optional in the admission process (before the pandemic). The College expects to remain test optional moving forward.

