

The Honorable Nancy King
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Stephanie Smith
House Appropriations Committee
Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Baltimore City Community College Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget

Dear Chair King and Chair Smith:

Governor Moore's budget demonstrates his vision and Maryland's commitment to education and to BCCC. The College is dedicated to providing the students of Baltimore City and surrounding areas with affordable higher education and maintaining a steady focus on college completion or workforce training. With your support, BCCC has been deliberate in its efforts to keep tuition and fees within the reach of the demographic we serve. BCCC remains one of the least costly community colleges in the State with one of the lowest tuition rates. BCCC has held the current level of tuition for the past 6 years and offers its "in-county" tuition rate of \$110 per credit for all Maryland residents, not just Baltimore City residents.

In FY 2023, BCCC awarded 466 degrees and certificates. Through its 33 degree and 19 certificate programs, the College served 4,924 credit students during the fiscal year (FY) 2023. The demographic and socioeconomic characteristics make full-time enrollment challenging for the majority of BCCC's students: 53.3% of credit students are 25 years of age or older and 47.8% are employed at least 20 hours per week. Of the students who responded to the Spring 2022 Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 42.9% reported having children that live with them and 64.4% reported that childcare is an important service.

In Fall 2023, BCCC increased its credit enrollment by 401 students which is 11.3% higher than Fall 2022. Enrollment for the Winter term 2024 increased by 27.8% increase over Winter 2023. The Spring 2024 enrollment is currently 3,676 which is a 22.7% increase over Spring 2023.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is one of the most robust and comprehensive plans of the history of Maryland's public education system. As public-school officials advance the implementation of the plan, Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) continues to collaborate with Baltimore City Public Schools.

The Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act went into effect. Part of the act includes providing access for students who are in their first or second year of post-secondary education and are working toward a teaching degree. To be eligible for funding support, they must attend a school where 40% of students receive federal Pell grants. Baltimore City Community College is one of only six schools in Maryland that meet eligible criteria.

The number of teachers who pursued National Board Certification in Maryland, a critical component of the Blueprint plan, increased from 711 in fiscal year 2022 to 2,372 fiscal year 2023. The number of students who participated in the state's Apprenticeship and Training Program increased from 124 in the 2021-22 school year to 507 the 2022-23 school year. We believe the trend will continue to increase. As it does, BCCC will need to continue developing the infrastructure to serve the needs of students pursuing a

profession in teaching and the Baltimore City Public School system as it works towards certifying a promising new wave of educators.

Baltimore City Community College has supported City Schools' Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) since 2016. The College continues to enroll high school students in our associate degree programs while they complete their high school diploma. Previously, P-TECH was offered at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Carver Vocational-Technical High School, and New Era Academy (which has since closed). On June 1, 2023, Digital Harbor High School replaced the New Era Academy, providing broader access to students throughout Baltimore City. The Class of 2023 has more than 260 City Schools students registered, with 202 students enrolled in BCCC classes. P-TECH students focus on specific pathways leading to an associate degree and employment in the career field of their choice including Healthcare, Information Technology, and Transportation and Supply Chain Management.

The College has expanded its recruitment territory to include Baltimore City Middle Schools and Baltimore County Public High Schools, as well as conduct recruitment events in other counties (i.e., Anne Arundel, Carroll County, Howard County, etc.) within the State. This expansion aligns with the recent change in the eligibility requirements for MSP and allows any recent Maryland high school graduate to be eligible to participate. In the past, MSP was specific to Baltimore City Residents. This major change has already resulted in an increase of enrollment at the College. In the dual enrollment program, the College hired an Assistant Dean of Early College Access and Programs who will oversee dual enrollment and engage with external stakeholders to implement a strategic approach that will lead to an increase in enrollment.

Academic Programming

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is elevating the stature of the teaching profession through the implementation of a career ladder, competitive salaries, including raising starting pay up to \$60,000 and incentives for National Board-Certified teachers up to \$17,000, as well as raising expectations for teacher preparation, induction, and mentoring programs to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

The newly approved Early Childhood Education degree program was developed to give students a seamless transfer option to four-year institutions. It was also created in response to the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding with Baltimore City Public Schools to enable paraprofessionals in the public schools to earn an associate degree in Early Childhood Education at BCCC. This is an exclusive MOU with the College which will increase enrollment in the College's Early Childhood Education program.

Baltimore City Community College has established a developmental education program to support Baltimore City Public Schools. The Assistant Dean of Early College and Access Programs has been hired to assist with the collaborative efforts to expand dual enrollment to include developmental education courses in reading, writing, mathematics, and college readiness skills. As part of the collaborative efforts to expand dual enrollment, Baltimore City Community College will conduct an adjunct credentialing and professional development for City Schools teachers.

Baltimore City Community College has launched five newly approved programs:

1. Certificate in Digital Marketing
2. Associate of Arts in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies
3. Associate of Arts in Communications
4. Associate of Applied Science in Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics
5. Associate of Arts Early Childhood Education

These programs are designed based upon workforce demand and regional impact. The programs will boost

student enrollment which supports the College's enrollment goals. Further the programs align with labor market trends, student interests and employment needs.

Realignment Task 9 directed the College to address the information technology (IT) and infrastructure needs of BCCC. To increase operational efficiencies, BCCC implemented a new integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to replace the College's legacy student information and administrative systems. The new system, Banner, has fostered an environment that supports positive student learning experiences and focuses on recruiting, retaining and graduating students. BCCC is working closely with the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to ensure timely and successful completion of project milestones. The Human Resources, Student, Finance, Financial Aid, and Student Accounting modules became operational in 2022.

For a period of time that is now approaching seven (7) years, BCCC has continued to implement the 12 Realignment Tasks that the legislature mandated for the College in 2017. The College provides periodic reports on the status of the 12 Tasks which are focused on improving student success and operational efficiencies. The first Joint Chairman's Report was submitted in November 2018 and Realignment updates are provided to the Board of Trustees during monthly open session meetings. Updates to the College community are also provided during the President's Forums and professional development throughout the year. The College is integrating the Realignment Tasks into the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaffirmation Self-Study process.

Finally, as a result of the engagement between the Faculty and administration, President McCurdy convened a Shared Governance Planning Council and charged it to "Examine the process of decision-making at the College and make (rational, practical and realistic) recommendations to the Board of Trustees for an inclusive, transparent and participatory governance structure." Shared Governance applies to the entire College and includes matters related to planning, policy, procedures and programs.

The College is committed to supporting the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore to provide vital educational and training opportunities. Thank you for your continued support of higher education and Baltimore City Community College.

Sincerely,



Debra L. McCurdy, PhD
President

cc:

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Members of the Education and Economic Development Subcommittee

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Mission

Baltimore City Community College provides quality, affordable, and accessible education meeting the professional and personal goals of a diverse population, changing lives, and building communities.

Vision

Baltimore City Community College is an innovator in providing quality career pathways and educational opportunities for a diverse population of learners to exceed the challenges of an ever-changing competitive workforce and environment.



OPERATING BUDGET RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Personnel Data

Context: As of December 31, 2023, BCCC's vacant positions were 105 vacancies above the number needed to meet its budgeted turnover rate and a vacancy rate of 32.5%. At the same time last year, BCCC had 111 vacancies above the number budgeted and a 34.1% vacancy rate.

	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 24-25
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	437.00	437.00	437.00	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>188.53</u>	<u>188.53</u>	<u>188.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Personnel	625.53	625.53	625.53	0.00

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	36.93	8.45%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/23	142.00	32.50%
Vacancies Above Turnover	105.07	

Comment: The President should comment on the continued high vacancy rate, efforts to reduce vacant positions, and the effect that the vacancies are having on the College's ability to meet its goals.

Response: Similar to other State agencies and businesses nationwide, BCCC continues to find it challenging to fill vacant positions, given the low national unemployment rate. Maryland leads the nation with the lowest unemployment rate, which makes it more challenging. Several factors contributed to the 32.5% vacancy rate. Retirements and resignations have played a significant role in the elevated vacancy rate. Many employees have opted for retirement, considering the operational impacts and changes related to COVID-19. BCCC returned to campus in September 2021. Some employees who utilized the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or the American Disabilities Act (ADA) during or after the College's period of remote operations have chosen to leave the institution. As the College continues resetting campus operations, BCCC is aggressively working to fill vacancies. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national average employee turnover rate in 2022 was 47%, with approximately 50 million people quitting their jobs in 2022.

Additionally, the College is responding to the legislative mandate to implement twelve (12) realignment tasks. Each Cabinet member is to review positions in their respective areas to determine levels of need and efficiency. Much of the review stems from the June 2018 edBridge personnel study, which provided documentation about BCCC's organizational reporting structure and corresponding position control. In this regard, an annual report is submitted to the State, which details changes in full-time positions. The breadth of change at BCCC, now operating with a "students first" model and culture, has proven to be more challenging for some personnel. In calendar 2023, it was the first time in several years that all cabinet positions were filled, thus creating a favorable environment for the College to meet its mission and achieve its goals and objectives.

Context: Add language restricting funds pending the receipt of report on full-time faculty, the college's contract system, and the implementation of Task 6 of the college's realignment.

Response: BCCC respectfully disagrees with the recommendation to withhold \$750,000 of the College's FY 2025 appropriation. The College submitted the 2023 JCR report on this task.

Historically, BCCC was significantly underfunded, placing the College at a competitive disadvantage, thus resulting in outdated infrastructure and outdated equipment needed to serve our students effectively. Recently, the College started to make the necessary infrastructure and equipment investments to deliver a quality product to our student population. Withholding \$750,000 in funding will slow down this progress and place our student population at a further disadvantage. BCCC recognizes the importance of this Report, and the College has made meaningful progress in meeting this requirement, including but not limited to the following:

1. In 2023, the College provided each full-time faculty member with a historical salary analysis to allow them to understand their pay better.
2. In 2023, BCCC implemented a more equitable and transparent salary range structure for full-time faculty. BCCC developed this new salary range model (minimum, mid, maximum) only after extensive engagements and listening sessions with faculty at all ranks.
3. BCCC implemented a new equitable and transparent process detailing the methodology for annual increases for Faculty promotions in rank.
4. To ensure equity, the College adjusted the faculty members' salaries who were below the new minimum salary range.
5. The College implemented a new point of hire process for new faculty with consideration for years of experience, highest degree/credential attained, and research.

Context: Adopt committee narrative requesting a report on enrollment and the Mayor's Scholars Program.

Response: BCCC submitted the 2023 report in December 2023 which highlighted the actions taken to increase enrollment in the Mayor's Scholars Program (MSP) and credit enrollment. The 2023 Joint Chairmen's Report included the 2022-2023 academic year. Therefore, BCCC respectfully requests the 2024 report be revised to only include the 2023-2024 academic year. In Fall 2023, credit enrollment increased by more than 11 percent as compared to Fall 2022.

The College has expanded its recruitment territory to include Baltimore City middle schools and Baltimore County Public High Schools, as well as conduct recruitment events in other counties (i.e., Anne Arundel, Carroll County, Howard County, etc.) within the State. This expansion aligns with the recent change in the eligibility requirements for MSP and allows any recent Maryland high school graduate to be eligible to participate. In the past, MSP was specific to only Baltimore City residents. This major change has already resulted in an increase of enrollment at the College. In the dual enrollment program, the College realigned a position for an Assistant Dean of Early College Access and Programs who oversees dual enrollment and engages with external stakeholders to implement a strategic approach that will lead to increases in enrollment.

BCCC will provide the requested MSP report by 12/02/2024.

2023 JOINT CHAIRMEN'S REPORT RESPONSES FROM AGENCY

Context: *Enrollment and MSP:* BCCC was required to submit a report in December 2023 that identified what actions were being taken to address the decrease in enrollment per FTES and what impact MSP had on FTES enrollment. Further information on the information provided on MSP can be found in Issue 1.

Response: BCCC submitted the 2023 report in December 2023.

Context: *Report on Full-time Faculty, the College's Faculty Contract System, and the Implementation of Task 6 of the College's Realignment:* BCCC was required to submit a report regarding the implementation of Realignment Task 6. It was to include a comprehensive review of all positions, faculty, and staff at BCCC, as required by Chapter 847 of 2017. As of this writing, BCCC has not submitted this report.

Response: Baltimore City Community College submitted the report on February 15, 2024. The College underscores the importance of this critical report and continues to streamline internal procedures to ensure its timely submission.