



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

February 11, 2020

TESTIMONY

HB 475 Community Colleges – Student with Disabilities

Submitted by:

**Dr. Dawn Lindsay, President
Anne Arundel Community College**

Position: Support

I want to thank the chair, vice chair and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony for HB 475, which will provide a grant program for supplemental services and supports for students with disabilities in Maryland's community colleges. I want to thank the sponsors and members of this committee for your continued support of the nearly 500,000 students in 16 community colleges in our state.

Community colleges support a wide range of differently-abled students. This grant program will help with the increasing number of students who need those services to be successful in achieving their academic goals.

Students come to us at different stages in life and we are committed to being student-ready. As part of this commitment, we work with students with disabilities and help them to complete their educational goals. While we are fulfilling our missions to serve the students, there are significant costs to the community colleges.

For example, we must provide students with disabilities with reasonable accommodations to assist them with their education. These accommodations are unique to each student and each disability. Among the most costly accommodations are for those students with sensory disabilities. These types of accommodations include but are not limited to sign language interpreters, transcription services, closed captioning, and materials in alternate formats (such as accessible screen readers or braille), tutors, note takers and specialized software. These services can range from the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

At Anne Arundel Community College, last fall, our disability services office worked with over 770 students. In FY2019, AACC spent \$423,785 in contracted services to provide supplies, services and support for our students compared to \$205,428 in FY2017. This is more than a 100% increase in two years.

Thanks to a reputation for doing a great job in educating, accommodating and providing our students with disabilities the resources they need to succeed academically, the number of students will continue to grow and with them, so too the costs will continue to increase. This grant program will provide at least \$2.5 million in the state's annual budget to help community colleges to fulfill our missions and better address the needs of our students who are differently-abled.

We respectfully request your support of HB 475 and appreciate your help in providing funds that will help ensure access for all students to high quality, affordable and accessible learning opportunities at community colleges in the state of Maryland.