



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

Submitted by

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HB 1082 – Higher Education – Denial of Transfer Credit – Notice and Report (Transfer with Success Act)

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) strongly supports HB 1082. As the representative of the chief academic officers of Maryland's sixteen community colleges, I add our collective and unanimous endorsement of this bill creating transparency within the transfer process for our students. Given that MACC and USM have a shared mission and responsibility for the success of our students (30% of all transfer students at USM began at a community college in Maryland (IRIS Transfer Dashboard for USM)), it makes sense that we work together to create a transfer environment that facilitates the most efficient and seamless transfer experience for our students. This is a matter of equity and inclusion, as well.

As to the efficiency of the transfer process in Maryland, the guiding principle must be that students need spend only that amount of time, money, and credits to earn the associate's degree as well as the baccalaureate degree. All of the community colleges in Maryland are at various stages of planning and implementing a Pathways program that clearly prescribes the number and sequence of courses they need to take in order to earn the 60 credits necessary to graduate with their associate's degree. This prescriptive pathway seeks to minimize, if not eliminate, the excessive number of credits that, historically, have inflated the time and the money students have spent getting to their associate's degree.

When it comes to transferring those associate degree credits to one of the institutions in the USM, it should be the rule that not just the credits, but the courses attached to those specific credits transfer fully to the relevant major at the receiving institution. Currently, it is not infrequently the case that the credits may transfer in, but the courses behind those credits only transfer in as general electives and not as program or general education-specific courses in a given program. This is the case even where ARTSYS specifies the course itself that is an acceptable transfer course; still, the receiving institution may not accept the course for transfer, but only the credits. This adds to the time, money, and credits a transfer student must spend in

order to receive the baccalaureate degree, not to mention the redundancy in courses taken and money spent.

Not only is efficiency a matter of credits, but it also includes the tuition dollars spent on having to re-take those courses not accepted into the receiving institution's program or major. Though the USMD may charge tuition by the term and not by the course, there is still a redundancy in paying money for a course they had previously taken at a community college; not only are students paying twice, but their graduation is deferred course by course for every course the USMD refuses to accept specifically for a given major. Furthermore, and allowing for singular exceptions, it should be the standard practice and expectation that a community college transfer student will spend no more time or money than it takes to earn the additional 60 credits to graduate with the baccalaureate degree once they have transferred into a USM institution with the 60 credit associate's degree.

Finally, this transfer issue is a matter of equity and inclusion. The more time, money, and credits students must spend to earn the baccalaureate degree, the less equitable and inclusive is the system itself. The poor and underserved students have fewer resources to achieve this all-American goal of a baccalaureate degree (or some advanced credential beyond high school); the more we expect them to pay in time, money, and credits to earn a degree because our transfer system is not transparent and equitable, fewer students will walk across our graduation stages, earning Bachelor's degrees. Those students on financial aid only have a limited amount of financial aid at their disposal. We have a shared mission and responsibility to create a transfer environment in Maryland that affords all students equitable access to the wealth of our educational system and, thereby, to a life achieving their personal and career goals.