



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 501
Maryland Higher Education Commission - Procedures – Alterations
March 29, 2022
Andy Clark, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Government Relations
Favorable

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 501. The bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to be made available to the public through live video streaming. The bill also requires the Office of Student Financial Assistance, on or before April 15 each year, to notify each student of the Office's decision regarding the student's application for a Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award. The University System of Maryland (USM) believes that these changes will benefit higher education and students throughout Maryland.

Each year thousands of Marylander high school seniors and their families go through the process of deciding where to attend college before the May 1st enrollment confirmation deadline. The type and amount of financial aid offered before the enrollment confirmation deadline play a significant role in deciding where to attend college. Students with high financial need and who are eligible for the need-based Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award are asked to make enrollment decisions without the full knowledge of financial aid funding available to them or with very little time to consider this complex matter. Some eligible students who are notified regarding their Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award after the May 1 enrollment confirmation deadline may not even enroll in college at all. For our eligible Maryland high school students, notification regarding their eligibility for the Award and the amount awarded by April 15 each year will help students and their families make an informed decision on where to attend college. For some eligible students with high financial need, the early notification will provide a full understanding of financial resources available to help them decide to enroll and where to enroll.

Second, it is important for all state agencies and entities to provide transparency and open government when conducting meetings, which includes posting recordings of meetings online. It is essential that recordings of MHEC's meetings are available to all higher education stakeholders. The University System Board of Regents must live stream and archive their meeting recordings on the website. We believe it makes sense for MHEC to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration on Senate Bill 501 and we request a favorable report.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.