



Senate Bill 254
Maureen Murphy, Ph.D., President
College of Southern Maryland
Unfavorable Report
February 9, 2022

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 254—College of Southern Maryland—Vice President of Equity and Inclusions—Funding and Responsibilities for two reasons: it is an unfunded overreach that jeopardizes the College of Southern Maryland’s accreditation and it completely disregards the current equity and inclusion work at the college.

Let’s assume good intentions and that this bill is trying to support equity work. I ask that the committee consider what the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is currently doing in regard to staffing, discrimination complaints, strategic equity work, and equity outcomes.

Staffing

- The President’s Cabinet consists of eight people, four of whom are African American and four of whom are women. When I arrived at CSM, one cabinet member was African American and two were women.
- The Vice President for Student Equity and Success, who is African American, reports directly to the President currently. Any multi-cultural programming comes through this division.
- There is a full-time coordinator for the Men of Excellence program, a fast-expanding program designed to support minority men.
- The Foundation is currently raising money to endow a position entitled the Distinguished Professor for Equity in Education. I launched this initiative last Fall and have contributed significant personal funds toward it.
- Five individuals across the college (four of whom are African American) are trained to investigate complaints of discrimination.
- There is a current opening for an Executive Director of Equity and Inclusion (DEI), which has been a difficult position for the college to hire and retain, largely because these positions are highly sought after. The focus of that role is to monitor compliance with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and do external outreach. We anticipate onboarding that person in the next few months.

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Prince Frederick Campus
115 J.W. Williams Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
443-550-6000

Regional Hughesville Campus
6170 Hughesville Station Place
Hughesville, MD 20637
301-539-4730

Discrimination Complaints

As mentioned above, five people across the college are trained to investigate complaints regarding discrimination. There is a link at the bottom of every page on the college's website to help individuals with complaints find a way to report them. Also, the college has a web feature entitled "Let's Talk" that is another way to engage the college. Students get information through the Student Handbook, orientation, the first-year seminar class, and My Learning, the learning management system.

Student complaints are sent to the Executive Director of Student Affairs, who is African American, who follows up. Employee complaints are directed to Human Resources. Of the five members of leadership team in Human Resources, four are African American, and all four of them have been hired since my arrival.

Strategic Equity Work

The College of Southern is nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute for achieving outcomes, including equity outcomes, and by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* for high numbers of minority graduates, especially in STEM fields. The college has been part of the Achieving the Dream network since 2019, a national organization of roughly 300 community colleges, that has as its primary focus the elimination of equity gaps among community college students.

The President's Cabinet is a talented diverse group of individuals, who ensure that the Board of Trustees' strategic goal "to ensure equity in all programs and services" permeates all aspects of the college. The result of the directive from the Board of Trustees is that this goal is integrated into every annual work plan for every department and business unit across the college.

An Equity and Inclusion Council is part of our participatory governance system, which has representatives from every constituency across the college. Among their charges is ensuring administrative policies are equitable.

I personally have worked for diversity, equity, and inclusion my entire career, having served two terms on the American Association of Community Colleges Commission on Diversity, Equity, an Inclusion, as well as participating in the early days of the Harvard University's Campus Diversity Initiative. Last March, I was recognized as one of the 25 most influential women in higher education by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

In short, the entire college is committed to DEI work; equity is everyone's job. Progress continues because equity work is ingrained in the work of every college division.

Outcomes

The College of Southern Maryland believes in continual improvement in all our equity work. To do that we measure and report progress, and work consistently to improve our outcomes. Consider the following:

- The college monitors and reports our progress on a DEI Dashboard on our website.

- In rankings of community colleges by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, CSM placed:
 - #15 for African American Engineering graduates
 - #30 for total minority Engineering graduates
 - #41 for African American Business graduates
 - #42 for African American Computer and Information Science graduates
 - #53 for African American Social Services graduates
 - #54 for African American Accounting graduates
 - #82 for total minority Social Service graduates
 - #88 for total minority Business graduates
- In a nationally normed student survey conducted every other year for over a decade, African American students consistently report much higher satisfaction rates than their white peers. This is reported on our DEI Dashboard.
- In a nationally normed employee survey conducted every other year for over a decade, African American employees consistently report higher satisfaction rates than white employees. This information is reported to the Board of Trustees and shared with the college community.

The specifics of SB 254 are insensitive to our existing culture and equity work, as well as an unfunded mandate that would take away from our current hiring priorities, which include full-time faculty and academic advisors.

Not only is SB 254 an unfunded mandate of more than \$600,000, it also compromises the college's accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education which requires the Board of Trustees to be free of outside influence, including political interference. SB 254 would put into law a mandate to hire specific employees, which undermines the fiduciary responsibility of the board of trustees to set budgets and institutional priorities.

I urge the members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee to give SB 254 an unfavorable report.