

Senate Bill 254
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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 and unjustified mandate and it completely disregards the superior current equity and inclusion work at the college.

The College of Southern (CSM) is nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute (Top 150) for achieving outcomes, **including equity outcomes**, and by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* for high numbers of minority graduates, especially in STEM fields. We are consistently ranked by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* in the **top 4% of 2700 colleges and universities nationwide**. For the latest period reported (2019-2020) CSM ranked 48th for total minorities in AS for Engineering (top 2%) and 94th in AS for Business/Commerce (top 3.7%). For the category of 2 or more races, **CSM scored 11th for AS in engineering (top 0.5%), 27th for AS in Business/Commerce (top 1%),** and 61st for AS in Computer And Information Sciences and Support Services (top 2.4%). Also, Dr Maureen Murphy was recognized by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* as one of 25 women who have made significant contributions to higher education. Additionally, CSM 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.

CSM's vision "CSM will be the region's first choice for **accessible, inclusive**, and innovative education that transforms communities" reflects CSM's core values for equity and inclusion. The Board of Trustees have metrics to ensure that vision becomes reality by: 1) Increasing completion rates by 3% by 2022 and by 10% by 2025; 2) Improve equitable access and completion of high-demand, high-wage programs among **underrepresented populations** by 5% by 2022 and 10% by 2025; 3) **Narrow the equity gap among all students by 50% by 2022 and 90% by 2025**; 4) Increase Pell participation rate by 5% by 2022 and 10% by 2025; and, 5) Increase the number of FAFSA applications on file by 5% by 2022 and 10% by 2025. The President's Cabinet is a talented, motivated, and 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 entire college is committed to equity, and monitors and reports progress on a DEI Dashboard on the college's website. 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. The specifics of SB 254 impose a structure that is oppositional to our current and well-recognized equity work. It also detracts from the college's current hiring priorities, which include full-time faculty and academic advisors. Additionally, SB 254 would put into law a mandate to hire specific employees. This directly usurps the state law that the Board of Trustees have regarding their fiduciary responsibilities to set budgets and institutional priorities for the Governor.

SB 254 an unfunded mandate in excess of \$600,000. It is a violation of the accreditation standards set by 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 ask the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee to give SB 254 an unfavorable report.