



## HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

### House Bill 295

### University System of Maryland - Student Withdrawal - Reimbursement of Tuition and Fees

February 14, 2023

### Favorable with Amendment

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and committee members, House Bill 295 requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy authorizing students to withdraw for extenuating circumstances such as illness, injury, hospitalization and mental health and wellness.

It is reasonable that institutions of higher education should adopt policies and procedures that allow students to withdraw for extenuating circumstances. That policy should include a provision to reimburse unexpended fees for instruction, and room and board, if applicable. The USM understands and is appreciative that the sponsor is open to amendments to House Bill 295 that affirm active policies and practices. USM institutions work closely with students experiencing challenges with physical and mental health to help them complete their studies or return to campus after a hiatus. Presently, each USM institution has specific policies and processes to support these students.

The implications of a withdrawal are consequential. At one USM institution, an existing Exception to Enrollment Policy receives approximately 200 applications annually. The school approved 33% of them. In many cases, the student was able to receive a W grade, which allowed them to withdraw from a course instead of failing. Further, for extenuating circumstances in which the student's verified last date of attendance/participation in the course was during the published refund period, in addition to the retroactive enrollment adjustment (i.e. grade change from F to W), the student is refunded accordingly.

**One commonality is that withdrawal policies begin with the first day of instruction and the failure to attend the university or attend classes does not change this policy.**

Institutions and students must consider the implications of withdrawal for the purposes of the return of federal financial *or Return of Title IV funds (R2T4)*. For the student, the percentage of funds returned decrease in the first three weeks of a semester. The funds schedule may vary campus-to-campus, but generally, students can expect a 90% refund in the 1st week; 50% in the second week; and 25% in the 3rd week. Regardless, students receiving Title IV federal financial aid must complete exit counseling as a condition of their loan agreement. That process begins here: <https://studentaid.gov/exitcounseling/>

Beyond that timeframe, our focus is to work with students so that they may complete the course successfully. Thank you for allowing the USM to share our position on House Bill 295 and we look forward to working with the sponsor of the bill.



### **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.

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