



Support

House Appropriations Committee
Senate Bill 395 (Augustine) Higher Education – Credit Eligibility and Transfer of Credits – English as a Second Language Courses (Credit for All Language Learning (CALL) Act)

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
March 20, 2024

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the nearly 55,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony of support (as amended) [Senate Bill 395 \(Augustine\) Higher Education – Credit Eligibility and Transfer of Credits – English as a Second Language Courses \(Credit for All Language Learning \(CALL\) Act\)](#). This bill would require any credits earned for English as a second language in a public community college to be eligible for world language or humanities electives credit and transferable to any institution of higher education, and an institution of higher education cannot deny the transfer of credits.

MICUA values the intent of the legislation to recognize a student's unique and lived experience before enrolling in postsecondary education. Many MICUA institutions offer an opportunity for prospective applicants to receive elective credit for those lived experiences. The MICUA members' campuses have a student population that is diverse in linguistic backgrounds. SB 395 helps to address an issue of multilingual English learners who may have encountered roadblocks when attempting to receive transferable, degree-applicable college credit for English Language Learning coursework. The bill as originally drafted would interfere with several institutions' degree completion requirements.

Several MICUA institutions participate in ARTSYS, the current articulation system for Maryland colleges and universities, operated by the University System of Maryland (USM). In both the Fall of 2021 and the Fall of 2022, MICUA institutions welcomed over 400 transfer students to campus from almost every community college in Maryland—15 different institutions. MICUA members continue to strengthen articulation agreements with community college partners and are working diligently to improve student transfer rates. In the last year, the number of Maryland community college articulation agreements among our institutions was 186, and one of our schools has nearly 90 articulation agreements in place.

Some MICUA institutions do not participate in ARTSYS for a myriad of reasons, including a niche course curriculum that does not lend itself to allow for any transfer of credits from any institution. For example, St. John's College holds a distinctive position in higher education, most notably for its unique pedagogy, in which all students study the same interdisciplinary curriculum over four years in small, cohort based discussion classes. Each cohort takes the same set of classes together over the course of their four year undergraduate experience. Due to the nature of the curriculum, the school does not accept **ANY** transfer credits – all students entering the undergraduate program must begin as first-year students and take the same required courses.

Capitol Technology University offers a substantial number of technical degrees and courses that would make mandatory acceptance of credits challenging for the institution. For instance, a student seeking to complete a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering must take certain courses to fulfill the program's math requirements, which include Calculus. The institution would not accept Algebra and Trigonometry (A&T) as a substitute to fulfill the requirement. Many transfer students have earned credit for A&T; however, the course does not satisfy any requirement for an engineering elective, social science elective, or humanities elective or any program that does not have general education electives. Typically, a student who requests transfer credits for those degrees has them entered as additional elective credits.

As amended, SB 395 mandates that MICUA institutions review and consider the transfer of credits for English as a second language or English Language Learner for either world language or humanities credit.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altema, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.

For these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 395.