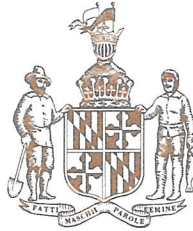


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Budget and Taxation Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 1022 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements - Requirements**

March 26, 2024

Mister Chairman and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

In the 2023 legislative session, the General Assembly added language to the 2024 budget requiring a workgroup to study the Program Approval Process for Maryland's Higher Education Institutions. The workgroup was further charged with preparing a report to include recommendations regarding whether the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) should:

1. develop operational missions to differentiate each institution's roles in meeting the State's goals;
2. develop three-year institutional plans to help facilitate efficient coordination of academic degree program offerings;
3. develop mechanisms to ensure that objective data demonstrates that proposed programs support State workforce needs and the economic competitiveness of the State and that MHEC has sufficient data analytics staff to evaluate these objectives;
4. develop measurable criteria to determine when a proposed new program is considered unreasonable/unnecessary duplicative;
5. make any revisions to the objection process, including any recommended statutory changes; (6) make any revisions of the criteria that trigger a full program review;
6. given projected enrollment declines, make any revisions to the program approval process to encourage collaboration among institutions to ensure viable programs; and
7. make any revisions to ensure that the program approval process has the primary goal of meeting the needs of the students and the State while ensuring full compliance with all applicable laws and legal precedents regarding program approval with respect to the historically black colleges and universities.

The Workgroup consisted of Co-Chairs Senator Nancy King and Delegate Stephanie Smith, Senator Ron Watson, Delegate Kevin Harris, Tuajuanda Jordan-President of St. Mary's College, Kristin Mallory-Vice President for Academic Affairs Wor-Wic Community College, Pace McConkie-Director of the Center for Civil Rights in Education Morgan State University, Darryl Pines-President University of Maryland College Park, Matthew Power-President Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), and Sanjay Rai-Acting Secretary Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

The Workgroup met five times from August 2023 through January 2024 and had productive conversations related to their charges including discussions about how other states oversee academic program development in higher education.

Senator Bill 1022 is a compilation of the final recommendations of the Workgroup on how program development and review in Maryland can be more transparent, predictable, and timely for higher education institutions but, most importantly, for students. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 1022.