

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Chairman Barnes,

I am writing to support increased funding for the Sellinger program and the Maryland Independent College and University Association's (MICUA) request to reverse the damage to this program in the FY 25 proposed budget. Our organization, Stevenson University Alumni Association, fully supports MICUA's request to:

1. Preserve the legislative integrity of the Sellinger formula, reject the language in the BRFA and restore the formula to its original methodology.
2. Include a new provision in the BRFA that ensures no single MICUA institution can receive more than 35% of the Sellinger formula allocation in one fiscal year.

The strength of Maryland's higher education system is built on the Sellinger and Cade formulas. As a result of these formulas, Maryland has an ecosystem of collaboration amongst the segments of higher education. No individual sector of higher education can possibly meet all the demands of our economy and the needs of Maryland students, which is why, for 50 years the General Assembly has sought to provide to the independent sector a small % of the per student funding that is provided to USM institutions.

Reducing the funding of the Sellinger program by nearly half is a disservice to Maryland's non-profit institutions and the Maryland students they serve. 89% of all Sellinger funds are dedicated to financial aid for Maryland students and at nearly all MICUA institutions, 99% of that funding is awarded to Maryland undergraduates. The BRFA cut creates huge funding disparities among the MICUA institutions where some receive drastic reductions (74%, 52%, 46%), eight receive cuts ranging from 10 to 22% and one institution receives nearly the same allotment as the prior year. The MICUA proposal will balance these disparities.

MICUA members avoided closures due to the pandemic but are still feeling the impact of the financial losses and the enrollment declines. When those effects are combined with the delays in the FAFSA, low-income students will suffer and that is where Sellinger dollars are utilized and most needed.

Please encourage your committee members to reject the language in the BRFA and adopt the MICUA compromise proposal, which still results in a \$26 million cut to the program and a nearly 20% reduction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley A. Bartkowicz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".