

February 10, 2025

Letter of Support in Favor of SB603:

University of Maryland, College Park Campus- TerpsEXCEED Program Funding

TerpsEXCEED at the University of Maryland College Park needs sustaining funding to continue to provide this outstanding opportunity for inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disabilities to live, learn, and earn alongside their same-age undergraduate peers. UMD is the only opportunity for inclusive higher education in MD. Students in TerpsEXCEED are expanding their career opportunities by attending UMD and participating in this career driven program in which they have a course of study that ties to their career interests and career experiences during the program each semester. TerpsEXCEED students are supported by a trained, certified cadre of 169 undergraduate peer mentors who provide academic, social, and career supports to promote full inclusion in all aspects of university life. The intentional inclusive peer mentoring practices are taught and implemented through a peer mentoring certification course, elective upper-level certification seminars, mentoring teams, and continuing layers of leadership mentors who implement mentoring practices to sustain and support inclusive practices to promote inclusion for TerpsEXCEED students in all aspects of their university experience. TerpsEXCEED impacts not only the TerpsEXCEED students themselves, but also the peer mentors who develop leadership skills and promote inclusion in their academic and social communities on campus and will bring these experiences with them as they join their career communities.

As the Associate Director of TerpsEXCEED, Mentor Supervisor and UMD Professor of the peer mentor certification course and leadership seminars, I am intimately aware of the impact TerpsEXCEED has on not only the TerpsEXCEED students and their families, but also as reported by the peer mentors themselves, the professors, the career experience supervisors from internship sites all over campus, dorm friends, teammates, club members, etc. Not only do the TerpsEXCEED students benefit, but the positive impact of TerpsEXCEED is spreading into all aspects of the campus and greater community.

TerpsEXCEED management urgently needs funding to provide quality supports to continue:

- academic course engagement
- campus engagement
- career engagement
- social engagement
- residential engagement
- campus access
- peer mentor certification
- peer mentor supervision
- campus career outreach
- career supervision
- academic inclusion outreach and support
- community partner engagement
- family engagement

TerpsEXCEED sustaining funding is critical for the management of TerpsEXCEED to continue to provide this exceptional, life-changing opportunity for students with intellectual disabilities to access UMD and to enable future expansion of this fantastic model.

Please accept my whole- hearted endorsement and sincere request for full funding of this fantastic program to which I have dedicated my heart and soul.



Meredith Gramlich
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University of Maryland, College Park