

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 678
Appropriations

(Delegates Harris and Bofo)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Public Higher Education - Communities of Interest - Targeted Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

This bill requires each public four-year institution of higher education (excluding the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)) to conduct targeted recruitment and outreach efforts each year. To that end, the other constituent institutions of the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University (MSU), and St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM) must each adopt and annually update a written policy that identifies communities of interest in the State as well as the institution’s targeted recruitment and outreach efforts for the community of interest – all with the goal of promoting diversity and inclusion at each institution by attracting and graduating a diverse student body committed to service. By August 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the affected constituent institutions of USM, MSU, and SMCM must report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House on information regarding the implementation of the bill, as specified. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Higher education expenditures for at least some public four-year institutions of higher education (excluding UMGC) increase, potentially materially, to hire additional staff. However, costs depend on the policies developed by each public four-year institution, and some institutions may be able to conduct targeted recruitment and outreach efforts by reallocating existing recruitment resources. Revenues are not materially affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill expands the principles of higher education for Maryland to include that public higher education should be committed to promoting diversity and inclusion at each institution by attracting and graduating a diverse student body committed to service.

“Community of interest” is defined as a community in the State identified by a public four-year higher education institution that has individuals from historically underrepresented groups, demographics, or geographic areas that the institution has determined are underrepresented in the enrollment of the institution or other institutions of higher education in the State.

“Targeted recruitment and outreach efforts” is defined as efforts specifically identified by a public four-year higher education institution and a community of interest to increase applications of students from the identified community of interest. It includes (1) establishing partnerships with community-based organizations, local school systems, or specific high schools and the public four-year higher education institution; (2) attending college fairs; (3) holding specific recruitment events in the community of interest; (4) establishing a student ambassador program; (5) holding college access workshops in the community of interest, with a focus on the admissions application process; and (6) providing dedicated support services and staff for the community of interest during the application process.

Reporting Requirement

The annual report must cover (1) the communities of interest identified by the institution; (2) targeted recruitment and outreach efforts completed in the previous school year for each identified community of interest (not required for the initial report); (3) planned efforts for the next school year in each community of interest; and (4) application and admission data for individuals in each identified community of interest.

Current Law:

Principles of Public Higher Education Detailed in Statute

Public higher education in Maryland should be based on the following principles:

- the people of Maryland expect quality in all aspects of public higher education: teaching, research, and public service;
- public higher education should be accessible to all those who seek and qualify for admission;

- public higher education should provide a diversity of quality educational opportunities;
- adequate funding by the State is critical if public higher education is to achieve its goal;
- the people of Maryland are entitled to efficient and effective management of public higher education; and
- the people of Maryland are entitled to capable and creative leadership in public higher education.

State Expenditures: Higher education expenditures for public four-year institutions of higher education (excluding UMGC) likely increase, potentially materially, to hire additional staff to conduct targeted recruitment and outreach efforts and meet the reporting requirement. However, any such additional costs depend on the policies developed by each institution. Some institutions may be able to redirect existing resources to do so; others may already fulfill most of the requirements under the bill and simply need to report on them. Nonetheless, even at institutions that are currently conducting targeted recruitment and outreach, additional staff may be required to *grow* their efforts. Due to being exempted from the requirements of the bill, UMGC is not affected. Ultimately, the scale and intensity of recruitment and targeted outreach efforts depend on the resources available at each institution.

For example, among the constituent institutions of USM, Towson University anticipates needing three to five full-time staff, with additional programming and travel costs, at an estimated cost of \$500,000 annually. The University of Maryland, Baltimore County advises that it already undertakes many of the activities listed in the bill; however, an additional half-time position may be required to handle additional reporting under the bill.

Conversely, MSU advises that the requirements of the bill can be accomplished using existing resources.

The Department of Legislative Services advises that the varying cost estimates are likely reflective of the scale of programs envisioned and the current resources available.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): University System of Maryland; Morgan State University;
Department of Legislative Services

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