

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 270

(Senator Hooper, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations

Institutions of Higher Education - Transfer of Credits - Letter of
Acknowledgment

This bill requires an institution of higher education that has been approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) but does not possess regional accreditation to have its students sign letters acknowledging that the transfer of credits earned at the institution may be difficult. The letter must be kept on file while the student is attending the institution and for at least two years after the student has completed the course of study at the institution. These requirements do not apply to nonaccredited institutions that have written articulation agreements with three or more regionally accredited institutions in Maryland. MHEC must create a template for the letter of acknowledgment and post the template on its web site.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MHEC could create and post a template for the letter of acknowledgment with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. Small business institutions that have earned MHEC approval but are not regionally accredited would incur minimal administrative costs to copy and file letters of acknowledgment. The bill could negatively impact tuition revenues at the institutions, but the impact is not expected to be significant.

Analysis

Current Law: MHEC must issue a certificate of approval to an institution of postsecondary education if it finds that: (1) the facilities, conditions of entrance and scholarship, and educational qualifications and standards are adequate and appropriate; and (2) the programs proposed by the institution meet the educational needs of the State. With a few exceptions, an institution of postsecondary education may not operate without MHEC's approval.

Background: MHEC reports that this bill would currently affect nine colleges in Maryland: four colleges of Jewish education, two colleges of technology, a graduate college for cyber-security, a graduate college for acupuncture and Chinese medicine, and a seafarers college. MHEC advises that all these schools are relatively small.

The Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) advises that all of its member institutions have regional accreditation and thus would not be affected by the bill. MICUA also reports that most of its member institutions do not accept credits from institutions that are not accredited.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Independent College and University Association, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

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