

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 777
Appropriations

(Delegate Proctor, *et al.*)

Higher Education - Institutions of Higher Education - Plans for Programs of
Cultural Diversity

This bill requires each institution of higher education in Maryland to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity. The plans must enhance cultural diversity programming and sensitivity to cultural diversity through instruction and training at the institution and must include implementation strategies and timetables for meeting goals in the plans. If an institution already has such a program in place, the institution must develop and implement a plan for improving the existing program. Institutions must submit their plans to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and MHEC must monitor the plans to track implementation and compliance with the plans.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Public institutions of higher education could develop and implement cultural diversity programs with existing personnel and resources. MHEC could monitor program implementation at the institutions with existing personnel.

Local Effect: Community colleges could develop and implement cultural diversity programs with existing personnel and resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. Private colleges and universities, including for-profit degree-granting institutions, would be required to adopt and implement programs of cultural diversity.

Analysis

Current Law: Institutions of higher education are not statutorily obligated to develop programs of cultural diversity.

Background: In fall 2006, a fraternity at Johns Hopkins University advertised and hosted a “Halloween in the Hood” fraternity party that many believe was offensive and possibly representative of underlying racial tensions on the campus. The fraternity that hosted the party was placed on social probation, meaning it may not hold parties or other social events, until January 2008. The Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), of which Johns Hopkins University is a member, advises that most MICUA member institutions have programs on cultural diversity and that course requirements and school-sponsored events at the institutions reinforce cultural sensitivity.

St. Mary’s College of Maryland, a public institution of higher education, reports that its five-year strategic plan includes cultural diversity goals. St. Mary’s also advises that it has many academic programs and student-based initiatives supporting cultural diversity.

State Fiscal Effect: *The University System of Maryland (USM) and Morgan State University (MSU) did not respond to requests for information on this bill.*

St. Mary’s College of Maryland reports that it could develop and submit a plan with existing resources. The plan is likely to include many components of its existing cultural diversity strategy. Assuming the plan it submits is sufficient, there would be no additional costs to implement the program. It is assumed that USM and MSU could likewise develop and implement programs of cultural diversity with existing resources.

MHEC advises that it could develop guidelines for cultural diversity plans and monitor implementation of cultural diversity programs with existing personnel.

Local Fiscal Effect: Community colleges would be required to develop and implement programs of cultural diversity. It is assumed that the plans and programs could be implemented with the existing resources of the colleges.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 416 (Senator Jones, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

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