



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Favorable with Amendments

House Appropriations Committee

House Bill 1208 (Solomon) Task Force to Study Academic Credit for Prior Learning in Higher Education

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of ***House Bill 1208 (Solomon) Task Force to Study Academic Credit for Prior Learning in Higher Education***. The bill creates a task force to study and develop uniform standards to award postsecondary academic credit for prior learning. The Task Force will establish requirements for adopting these standards, determine standards for the transferability of this credit, review and assess specified scoring standards, and collect data. The composition of the Task Force includes representatives of relevant State agencies and *public* institutions of higher education in the State. Findings and recommendations regarding best practices are required to be submitted to the General Assembly by *July 1, 2022*.

Credit for prior learning, sometimes referred to as competency-based education or prior learning assessment, is a broad term that encompasses the awarding of academic credit for experiential learning that can be demonstrated through a variety of methods (i.e. external examination, internal assessment, or credit for military education and service). Current credit hour requirements under COMAR include the MICUA institutions. Further, MICUA schools play an important role in educating students who will benefit from the award of this type of credit, especially in industries with a high demand for an expanded workforce. The majority of MICUA institutions are already engaged in awarding credit for prior learning to some extent. Due to the lack of a formal State standard in this area, the implementation of awarding academic credit for prior learning varies by each institution. For example, one of our institutions uses adult-friendly practices such as distant (online) courses, evening class schedules, accelerated 8-week classes, and the formation of student cohorts. Another institution employs an administrative staff member with extensive experience in competency-based education, focusing on prior learning assessment to develop policy to award credit for prior learning. Therefore, **MICUA respectfully requests an amendment to include a representative of MICUA on the Task Force.**

Over 36 million Americans have some college or no college degree, and prior learning assessment is a strategy that will help these individuals earn degrees to qualify for positions which meet workforce needs. The interest in prior learning assessment has grown in the state and nationally. Many institutions with national reach have already begun to award credit for prior learning based on competencies. The timeline for reporting findings and recommendations in the legislation may result in disadvantaging Maryland institutions in the national marketplace by delaying the review and approval of policies to award prior learning. This outcome would reduce the potential positive impact that awarding credit could have to meet the Maryland Higher Education Commission's goal of 55% of the state's residents between the ages of 25 and 64 to earn an associate degree or higher by 2025. **MICUA respectfully requests an amendment to accelerate the timeline by which the Task Force will complete its work.**

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1208

Offered by: MICUA

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 2, in line 8, strike "and"; after line 8, insert: "(vi) one representative of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA); and"; and in line 9, strike "(vi)" and substitute "(vii)".

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, in line 16, strike "July 1, 2022," and substitute "September 1, 2021".

MICUA requests a favorable with amendments report for House Bill 1208.