

The Frostburg State University Student Government Association

Testimony for HB1295

Maryland General Assembly, Tuesday, March 16th, 2021

POSITION: FAVORABLE

My name is Max Hancock and I am a senator in the Student Government at Frostburg State University. I'd first like to thank Chair McIntosh and the committee as a whole for the opportunity to discuss this bill. It is my utmost honor to testify here today, as my constituents and I consider the passage of House Bill 1295 key for creating transparency and good will across the University System of Maryland's various campuses.

The process by which USM student fees are determined is one that should include students<sup>1</sup>. Whether mandatory or program-specific, University System of Maryland policy dictates that representative advisory boards be given the opportunity to review fee decisions. This policy theoretically establishes a universal mission of transparency, but that mission isn't actively pursued.

While my colleagues at the University of Maryland identified an instance of misspent departmental fees, I want to focus my attention on a different provision of this bill. Frostburg State's student body faces unique barriers to participating in the fees process. Learning who serves on the fee review board was challenging, even for someone like myself, a senator in the student government. After a convoluted series of emails, which directed me to three different administrators and a variety of student leaders, and a few meetings on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that our University's fee review board is entirely inaccessible, lacks transparency, and is not representative of student stakeholders as is stipulated in the relevant USM policy. Meetings are not publicized, the school's website bears no mention of this board or its membership, and it is not visible to the average student.

This is not the transparent process Maryland students were promised. Frostburg saw a nearly 20% increase in fees from 2016 to 2019<sup>2</sup>. The majority of students had no easy way of identifying the parties responsible for these increases, a travesty for a school that prides itself on being accessible to all. FSU is a low-income community, and we can't endure many more attacks to the well-being of our most vulnerable students.

House Bill 1295 represents an opportunity to enforce the standards of respect and financial sustainability that recent years have seen neglected. Without this bill's protection, students have no reason to trust the process that demands they surrender their money for unspecified purposes. Thus, the student body of Frostburg State requests a favorable report on House Bill 1295, for the good of our education and community.

Sincerely,  
Max Hancock  
He/Him/His  
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<sup>1</sup> [USM Fee Policy](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Data can be found here](#)