



## EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### TESTIMONY

Submitted by

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### SB 886 – Transfer with Success Act

### POSITION: Favorable

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) and the Maryland Council of Community College Presidents strongly supports SB 886 – the Transfer with Success Act.

We greatly appreciate Senator Elfreth's recognition regarding the importance of a transparent transfer process between Maryland's two- and four-year public institutions of higher education. This legislation calls for a data collection process with the intent of documenting those courses and credits that are denied transfer and provide feed-back to students and sending institutions on the reasons why a course or credit are denied transfer.

MACC recognizes that much work is currently being done to retool and improve ARTSYS and that two- and four- year faculty discipline committees are meeting to implement and strengthen statewide transfer agreements. While we support these efforts and initiatives, they do not provide accountability for denying the transfer of credits or courses.

With National data showing that 22% of credits are lost upon transfer, it is imperative to address this issue. The request for a comprehensive data collection process established in this legislation is a first step in streamlining Maryland's transfer process.

The reporting required by this legislation will benefit students, the State, and our public postsecondary institutions for the following reasons:

#### THE STUDENT

Without transparency concerning credit or course transfer decisions, transferring students lack the information to determine what course credits will be accepted by the four-year institution to which they desire to transfer. As a result, students are left having to retake a course(s) despite following all the rules, whether they be an articulation agreement or the utilization of the state's transfer system, ARTSYS.

When students are required to retake a course, it delays the completion of their degree requirements and increases the cost of the desired degree. Time and cost are the two main reasons students do not complete their degree requirements.

MACC believes these students are owed an explanation when their courses or credits do not transfer. This legislation allows for the sending institution to understand why a course or credit(s) did not transfer and to advocate on the student's behalf when the receiving institution refuses to accept transfer of courses or credits.

### **THE STATE**

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), nationwide data shows that up to 22% of credits are lost when a student transfers from a community college to a public four-year institution. Nearly a third of college students transfer for various reasons in their pursuit of a college degree.

The State supports the operating costs of all public post-secondary institutions. Requiring a student to repeat a class at a public four-year institution has a substantial impact on the State's financial commitments. On average, Maryland spends \$13,307 per full-time equivalent student (FTES) at public four-year institutions and \$3,327 (if not BRFA'd) per FTES at the community colleges. In short, that is a 400% increase on a per FTES basis over what the State's financial commitment is for community colleges.

Maryland currently does not have the ability to determine how much money the State is being asked to re-support students who take courses at a community college and are denied credit or course transfer. This legislation may find that Maryland is doing a much better job than what is happening nationally. Maryland does have a strong pipeline for transfer students from the community colleges to University System of Maryland institutions.

### **THE INSTITUTION**

This legislation requires institutions to report why a course or credit does not transfer giving sending institutions the opportunity to review course outcomes and make adjustments to ensure future transfer acceptance.

A more transparent process would eliminate the need for the array of current articulation agreements between the two- and four-year institutions. Currently much time and limited resources are spent among Maryland's institutions of higher education negotiating an array of articulation agreements with individual institutions. The last report from MHEC documents that well over 300 articulation agreements exist between the two- and four- year segments of higher education. Articulation agreements often come with "fine print" that becomes a barrier as students try to understand their options and determine the best path forward to degree completion. The ultimate goal of streamlining the transfer process would allow all this institutional effort to be directed at student success strategies instead of crafting complicated deals to overcome transfer barriers.

### **CONCLUSION**

Higher education institutions must be able to navigate transferability in a responsible way for students. The information and transparency required by this legislation will enable Maryland's post-secondary institutions to reduce credit and course transfer denials and better serve Maryland students by expediting the time-to-degree and reducing student debt.