



**SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 886**

**Transfer with Success Act**

**February 25, 2021**

**Favorable with Amendment**

**Joann Boughman**

**Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs**

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding Senate Bill 886. The bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to establish notification procedures regarding the denial of transfer credits; report the denial to the institution from which the transfer student originates; and submit to MHEC an annual report listing the denials and the reasons for the denials.

The University System of Maryland strives to ensure that the transfer process works as smoothly as possible. Senate Bill 886, as written, is challenging to a process that is dynamic and often changing. Of the 2019 cohort of comparable baccalaureate degree recipients, the 9,214 that began as first-time freshmen averaged 132.1 credit hours. Of the 7,671 transfers from Maryland Community Colleges, the average number of credits was 127.8. While there are several reasons for each of these cohorts to have more than the basic requirement of 120 credits required for most bachelor's degrees, these average numbers do not tell the stories of individual students that have met challenges.

The reporting requirements in Senate Bill 886 require extensive communication between the sending and receiving institution. Our institutions work diligently to create articulated pathways for students so that the transfer may be as seamless as possible. If students follow these recommended transfer pathways, they should not "lose" any credits in the transfer process.

The language in the bill, including "denial of transfer credit" should refer to courses wholly ineligible for transfer. However, this will not reflect the most common of the issues for the student. It is not that the credit is "denied." The most common situation is that the courses taken do not apply to the major as selected at the receiving institution, and therefore the student must take additional prerequisite courses to complete the major and earn the degree. In other words, the courses are transferrable for credit, but not applicable to the degree. No transfer platform will amend this issue.

ARTSYS is a computerized information system created to facilitate the transfer of students from Maryland community colleges to the USM institutions and other participating institutions. We are now seeking mechanisms to support the upgrading of the ARTSYS system of transfer for the state of Maryland but understand that there are many challenges remaining. Senate Bill 886 does not fix these problems outright. However, it is important to recognize that the recording and

transcription of transfer credits differs from institution to institution and is decentralized at some campuses.

We currently work with the leaders of Maryland community colleges to focus on improving the transfer system. In addition to hosting a meeting of presidents from USM and community colleges, we are also convening a work group of chief academic officers to work out more details and gaps in the transfer process. We believe that we could be responsive to the mandates in the proposed Senate Bill 886, if the suggested amendments could be incorporated.

(B) THE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL REQUIRE:

- (1) A RECEIVING INSTITUTION THAT DENIES TRANSFER CREDIT TO AN ENROLLED STUDENT TO NOTIFY THE TRANSFER COORDINATOR OR INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNEE OF THE SENDING INSTITUTION ABOUT THE DENIAL WITHIN A TIME THAT THE COMMISSION DETERMINES TO BE THE ~~EARLIEST~~ LATEST POSSIBLE TIME FOR THE NOTIFICATION AND SPECIFY THE RATIONALE FOR THE DENIAL;
- (2) THE TRANSFER COORDINATOR OR INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNEE OF THE SENDING INSTITUTION, AFTER RECEIVING NOTICE OF A DENIAL OF TRANSFER CREDIT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RECEIVING INSTITUTION DESIGNEE, TO CONDUCT AN ~~INTERNAL~~ REVIEW WITHIN ~~15 DAYS TO ADDRESS THE REASONS FOR THE DENIAL 14~~ SUBMITTED BY THE RECEIVING INSTITUTION A TIME THAT THE COMMISSION DETERMINES TO BE APPROPRIATE;

The proposed amendments would make the mandate feasible and would define appropriately the responsibility as a shared responsibility of both the sending and receiving institution.

The USM is committed to working with the sponsor and other legislators to make the transfer process smoother and more comprehensive.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our Favorable with Amendment position on Senate Bill 886.