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Uploaded by: Brown, Ashalee

Position: FAV

The University of Maryland Student Government Association

Testimony for SB886

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021

Transfer With Success Act

Position: Favorable

My name is Ashalee Brown. I am a student at the University of Maryland and one of the transfer representatives in the Student Government Association. I would like to start off by thanking the hardworking members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for considering my testimony, and Senator Elfreth for sponsoring this important bill, which will support transfer students during their transfer process to four-year institutions.

It is a known fact that every year, transfer students face difficulties when leaving their home institutions to reside permanently at another. For multiple reasons, this is one of the most stressful processes for students, especially those who are not familiar with the higher education processes at larger institutions or even familiar with the United States education system itself. I speak from the position of being both a recent transfer student from Montgomery College to the University of Maryland, College Park and a newly introduced student to the American education system, having recently emigrated from Jamaica. Like many other institutions, Montgomery College has a transfer alliance with the University of Maryland that permits qualified students to be automatically accepted to the university. Given its closeness in proximity and the prestigious nature of UMD, many Montgomery College students, like myself, take this route.

Before transferring, my peers and I at Montgomery College were advised to take as many upper-level courses that we can at the community college level as we would have more access to help and smaller class sizes. However, once we got to orientation at UMD, we were told the opposite. The University requires students to re-do upper-level courses that were taken at another institution (regardless of the existence of a transfer alliance), as the curriculums are different and independent of one another. Essentially, students have to repay and dedicate additional hours to learning the same material at a different institution without a thorough explanation of the denial of their coursework and credits. This happened to me and to many other transfer students who have been forced to make changes to their degree plans to accommodate courses that they have already taken.

It is my aspiration to have a better communication system between institutions and students when it comes to detailed explanations behind the denial of their coursework. This bill will require institutions to present this explanation and, in turn, will lead to future examples and advice for transfer students choosing coursework at their home institutions. I urge the committee to give a favorable report to the Transfer with Success Act.

Kind regards,

Ashalee Brown, *Transfer Student Representative, UMD Student Government Association*

Dan Alpert, *Student Body President*

Ben Baitman, *Director of Government Affairs*

SB886_SenElfreth_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Elfreth, Sarah

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2021

Testimony in Favor of SB0886
Transfer with Success Act

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Environment, Health, and Education Affairs Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 886, the Transfer with Success Act. This legislation will help create an effective and transparent process for the transfer of credits in Maryland's higher education systems.

As this Committee well knows, students, many of whom are low-income or first-generation students, are choosing to transfer to four-year universities after starting their education in community colleges. This approach has the benefit of saving both the student and the State money and, ultimately, results in higher completion rates. Despite this, current transfer processes result in the loss of many credits which students have paid for and put time and effort into earning. Maryland can and must do better.

Senate Bill 886, the Transfer with Success Act, seeks to address this challenge by creating transparency within the transfer process and accountability for schools while protecting students.

The bill will require three critical practices in the transfer process by:

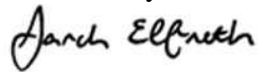
1. Requiring students and transfer coordinators to be notified not only of denied credits, but also the reasoning behind all denials;
2. Ensuring transfer coordinators conduct internal reviews into the denials within fifteen days of receiving a denial;
3. Requiring that all schools include a report of all denials and reasoning behind those denials in their annual reports to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Senate Bill 886 is not a silver bullet policy solution, but it is a positive step forward for tens of thousands of Maryland students. When a credit is denied it results in the State potentially, and at best, funding a student in the same class twice: once at the community college and once at the significantly more expensive four-year institution. At worst, a credit denial can stop a promising community college student in their pursuit of higher education. SB 886 does not seek to lower quality standards of the four-year

universities - it seeks to demystify a process that is shutting too many young people out. This General Assembly can then gain a fuller picture of the issue and take further action to ensure the best public policy.

We have the chance to shape and influence the future for education in Maryland. Every student moving on to higher education is another highly educated Marylander being added to the workforce. These students should not be punished for their desire for an affordable education - we must do all we can to bridge the gaps between community colleges and our four-year colleges and universities. SB 886 is a step forward in that effort. I again respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 886.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'E'.

Sarah Elfreth

SB 886_MACC_FAV_B.Sadusky.pdf

Uploaded by: Sadusky, Dr. Bernard

Position: FAV



EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

Submitted by

Dr. Bernard Sadusky, Executive Director

bsadusky@mdacc.org

SB 886 – Transfer with Success Act

POSITION: Favorable

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.

SB886_USM_FWA_BOUGHMAN.pdf

Uploaded by: Boughman, Joann

Position: INFO



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.