



March 11, 2022

To: House Appropriations Committee
From: Shirley Brandman, Chair of the Universities at Shady Grove Board of Advisors
Re **House Bill 1446 – SUPPORT with amendments** (Hearing: March 15, 1 p.m.)

On behalf of the Board of Advisors for the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), we write in strong support of House Bill 1446 -- *Universities at Shady Grove Regional Higher Education Center – Workforce Development Programs – Funding*. The appropriation of \$5 million in Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 for the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) Regional Higher Education Center required by House Bill 1446 will provide critical funding to accelerate the groundbreaking work USG is leading to develop innovative pathways that best prepare the future workforce for our county, region and State.

As the largest and most evolved Regional Higher Education Center within the University System of Maryland, USG has invested considerable effort in developing strong and deep relationships with the County's educational partners to ensure access to affordable degree programs that prepare students to compete in the industries of today and tomorrow. USG proudly serves the most diverse population of students in the state and has the highest rate of degree completion for transfer students of any campus within the University System of Maryland. Moreover, thanks to prior state investment, USG is home to the extraordinary and cutting-edge [Biomedical Sciences and Engineering facility](#) that will train the region's future STEM workforce in Montgomery County.

USG has just completed work on its first ever strategic plan which sets forth a powerful vision for centering our work on workforce development by ensuring that all our students graduate career ready with the skills and experience needed by our state's industries. The strategic plan sets forth the promise that – working with industry and workforce partners--USG will hold itself accountable for ensuring that students secure meaningful employment and career opportunities upon completion of their studies. Indeed, USG is already deeply involved in several workforce and economic development initiatives in partnership with Montgomery County's Economic Development Corporation and other business leader which can catalyze needed talent development to feed workforce pipelines.

The BOA supports House Bill 1446 because it will provide the resources necessary to make USG's strategic vision a reality. The investment contemplated by House Bill 1446 will expedite USG's capacity building and allow USG to meaningfully address workforce gaps by preparing and launching diverse, highly-skilled and career ready graduates into the region's labor force especially in high demand areas such as the life sciences and education.

For these reasons, the Board of Advisors supports House Bill 1446 (with amendment that the funding be supplemental to USG's base budget) and respectfully requests a favorable report.