

Testimony by Dr. Anne Khademian

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Maryland House of Delegates Appropriations Committee Hearing for HB 1446 - SUPPORT

March 15, 2022 – 1 p.m.

Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today in support of HB 1446. Thank you in particular to Education and Economic Development Vice Chair, Delegate Solomon, for sponsoring this legislation, which will provide more career-building opportunities for students and help greatly in building our regional workforce.

I'm Anne Khademian and I have the privilege of serving as Executive Director of the Universities at Shady Grove. USG is the largest of the University System of Maryland's three regional higher education centers and offers nearly 80 undergraduate and graduate degree programs from nine of our outstanding public universities on one campus, in the heart of Montgomery County. In collaboration with our nine university partners, we offer upper-division undergraduate programs and graduate programs, as well as post-baccalaureate certificate programs, and credentialing and training opportunities.

Recently, we launched what we call "USG 2.0," a strategic plan to help chart our institution's course for the next decade. It's a plan that places that focuses squarely on career readiness and on building pathways to successful and meaningful careers for all students who attend the USG campus. It's also a plan that addresses our fiscal sustainability by building an educational model that supports growth, innovation and collaboration, with a focus on return on investment (ROI) for students and all other stakeholders – such as the businesses and employers that depend on a thriving workforce.

This bill aims to meet the needs of those important stakeholders head on, by investing in programs from our university partners that directly support the workforce development needs of our region and state. In particular, we will focus on growing and bringing in more of the in-demand, undergraduate and graduate degree or certification programs that are most needed in the workforce, in areas such as life sciences, teaching, behavioral health and information technology.

We are working closely with our educational partners at the K-12 and community college level – and of course with our university partners – to build solid, seamless pathways that will help to lead students into these highly sought-after industries. Most importantly, we will be laser-focused on ensuring that students emerge with the skills and knowledge they need to hit the ground running as they launch their careers and help to grow our local and state economy.

Last week, we were proud and honored to host a farewell event for one of our most stalwart university partners, longtime UMBC President Freeman Hrabowski. As all of you know, he will be retiring soon after 30 amazing years of leadership. As part of that tribute, I hosted an on-stage conversation with Dr. Hrabowski. One of the things he highlighted was the important role that the USG campus plays, in particular, when it comes to workforce development. Dr. Hrabowski made specific reference to the kinds of students who choose the Shady Grove campus for their studies and he said: "We want to build a workforce based on affordability, accountability, access and success," all of which he noted are the hallmark of USG.

With the additional investment that HB 1446 would provide specifically for programs that will meet workforce demands, we can do just that. We will be able to turn out more career-ready graduates who benefit from the "affordability, accountability, access and success" that embodies the student experience at the Universities at Shady Grove. Thank you.