

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 4
CYBERSECURITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM – ALTERATIONS AND
MARYLAND CYBERSECURITY
LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM – ESTABLISHMENT

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POSITION: SUPPORT

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 4 this afternoon.

I am Dr. Douglas Harrison, Dean, School of Cybersecurity, at the University of Maryland Global Campus. I am testifying on behalf of the university as the administrator responsible for overseeing its cybersecurity degree and certificate programs. We support the provisions of SB 4 as additional steps to ameliorate the cybersecurity workforce needs of Maryland's public sector. For purposes of this testimony, however, we address one provision which we believe will have the greatest impact, namely, opening the Scholarship for Service Program to part-time students. We believe this change in the Program would enhance equity, serve diversity, and to the State's advantage, expand the talent pool from which it could select scholarship awardees.

First, equity. Part-time students constitute a very large proportion of the student population of the State, and we believe that they should have the same opportunity as full-time students to apply to the Scholarship for Service Program. For the fall of 2021, the University System of Maryland reported that 66,179 of its students were enrolled part-time.¹ That was 40% of USM's total Statewide student headcount.² For Maryland community colleges, the headcount and the percentage is even higher. In the fall of 2020, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) reported that 75,199 credit earning students (69% of the total credit earning population) were enrolled part-time.³ These data do not include part-time students at private-nonprofit institutions across the State. Even so, it is clear that the current Program excludes a very large number of Maryland postsecondary students.

Second, extending eligibility to part-time students would augment the effort of bringing under-represented groups into the cybersecurity field and into public service. In the case of UMGC, for

¹ See University System of Maryland Statewide Headcount, Enrollment Student Level, and Attendance Status at <https://www.usmd.edu/IRIS/DataJournal/Enrollment/?report=Headcount-by-Level-Attendance>

² Ibid. In the fall of 2021, the part-time student headcount was 66,179 out of a total student headcount of 164,852.

³ See 2021 MACC Databook, Enrollment, at <https://mdacc.org/wp-content/uploads/1-Enrollment-2021.pdf>. The Databook reports that in FY 2020, there were 75,199 part-time credit earning students against a total of 108,335 credit earning students.

example, more than 80% of its students are part time⁴, more than half are women, and 43% identify as African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Pacific Islander.⁵ Data suggest that this profile is not unusual across the US part-time student population in general.⁶

Finally, expanding Program eligibility to part-time students would add a large recruiting pool both rich in talent and likely to be very interested in the Program. Part-time students have characteristics that make them especially responsive to incentives that encourage them into careers like cybersecurity where market demand is high. They tend to be older, are more likely to be married than not, and are often career changers, seeking professions that will have a long trajectory over their lives. Again, UMGC is a good case study.

As mentioned, more than 80% of UMGC's students matriculate on a part-time basis. In FY 2021, the university awarded nearly half of all USM's bachelor's and master's degrees in cyber-related fields.⁷ Under SB 4, some number of future graduates like these would likely be headed to work in the Maryland public sector under the terms of Scholarship for Service Program. The same could be said of part-time students graduating with cyber-related degrees from elsewhere in the USM, from private non-profit institutions, and from the State's community colleges.

In sum, expanding program eligibility to part-time students serves equity—it provides them the same opportunity as now exists for full-time students—it promotes diversity by augmenting the effort of bringing under-represented groups into cybersecurity and Maryland's public sector, and finally, it benefits the State by significantly expanding the size of the talent pool from which it can recruit promising students.

While we emphasize one provision of SB 4 in our testimony, we support the bill in its entirety and urge a favorable report. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

⁴ In USM's fall of 2021 snapshot, UMGC's ratio of part-time to full-time students was 45,251/55,323. See the USM Statewide Headcount, Enrollment, and Attendance Status at

<https://www.usmd.edu/IRIS/DataJournal/Enrollment/?report=Headcount-by-Level-Attendance>

⁵ See USM Statewide Headcount, Enrollment Student Level, and Attendance Status at

<https://www.usmd.edu/IRIS/DataJournal/Enrollment/?report=Headcount-by-Level-Attendance> and USM Statewide Headcount Enrollment Gender by Ethnicity at <https://www.usmd.edu/IRIS/DataJournal/Enrollment/?report=Gender-by-Ethnicity-Semester>

The fall 2021 snapshot shows UMGC with a total head count of 55,323, of which 15,597 students identified as African American, 7,916 as Hispanic, 272 as American Indian, and 403 as Pacific Islander for a total of 24,188.

⁶ For example, see the National Center for Educational Statistics, Student Race and Ethnicity (Figure 1) for students at two-year institutions, remembering that more than 60% of their students are part-time, at

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csb>, and National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (Table 8, Institution and Gender) at https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/fall2021_currenttermenrollment_appendix/

⁷ As recorded by USM, the ratio of UMGC bachelor's and master's degrees awarded in cyber-related fields to the USM total in this category was 3,816/7,708 (49.5%). See University System of Maryland, Cybersecurity Degrees by Degree Level, Field, and Institution at <https://www.usmd.edu/IRIS/DataJournal/CyberSecurity/?report=Degrees-by-Degree-Level-by-Field>