

Senate Bill 81
Christy Lombardi, Trustee, Board of Trustees, College of Southern Maryland
Unfavorable Report

January 24, 2024

I am Christy Lombardi and as a Trustee for the College of Southern Maryland, I request an Unfavorable Report for SB 81 – Higher Education – College of Southern Maryland – Budget.

As we prepare our Fiscal Year 2025 budget, the College of Southern Maryland is only now in our second year of operating under a unified budget model. If I may, let me explain how this local budget process works.

County operating budget requests are based on three factors: first, the county’s Full Time Equivalency as determined by MHEC, which is the Maryland Higher Education Commission; second, by the unduplicated headcount within that county; and third, by the square footage of the campus buildings located within the specific county.

Funding increases are calculated by distributing these costs based on each county’s share of these factors. County boundaries do not exist for our students when it comes to the classes they attend, the services they receive, or the online and in-person programming they require. This funding formula and the equitable distribution of the funds we receive are grounded in the same equitable principle of meeting our students where they are, supporting their mobility, and avoiding expensive duplication.

The college currently provides two annual budget reports to the state and going forward we acknowledge the importance of providing this same accountability to our three counties. The two reports show the college’s budget revenues and expenditures by each county at the beginning and at the end of the fiscal year. These comprehensive reports will be equally valuable for our county partners to see how their funding is being spent and in holding the college accountable for the distribution of these allocations.

Combined, our three counties fund about 30 percent of the college’s overall annual operating budget, and we are grateful for their support to help make the College of Southern Maryland more accessible to the demands of our students and more efficient in the way we manage and operate our virtual and physical campuses serving our three counties.

The college's current budget process enables great flexibility and efficiency in the operations of the College. I ask for your unfavorable report of SB81 to allow us to maintain our current budget process as we continue to work with our county partners in providing them greater accountability and transparency. Thank you.

Christy Lombardi, Trustee
Board of Trustees, College of Southern Maryland